Winter 2004

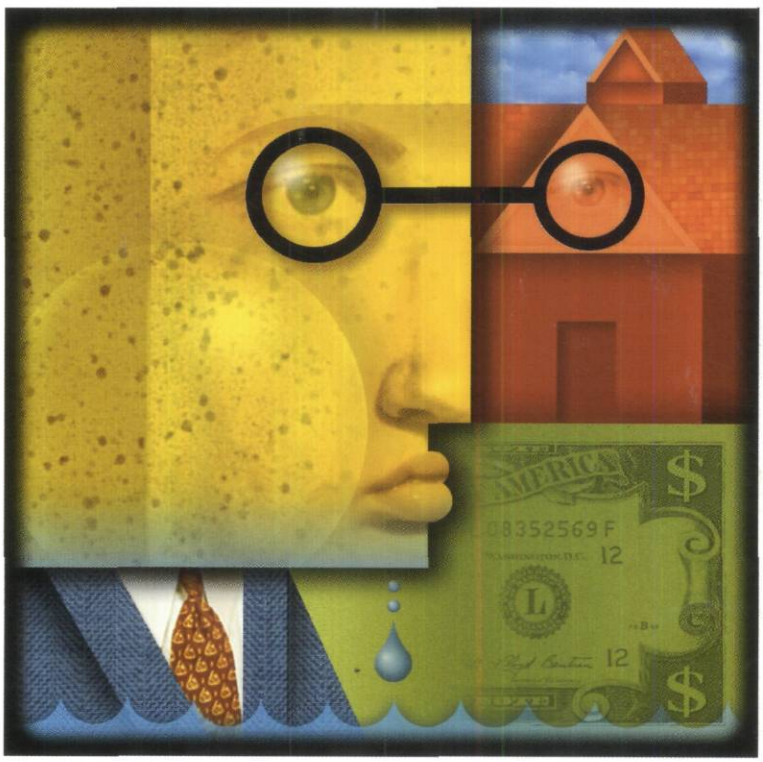
EDUCATION next

A JOURNAL OF OPINION AND RESEARCH

The Dollar Sponge

Why school districts can't downsize

JON FULLERTON • WILLIAM OUCHI



IN THIS ISSUE:

The New Head Start, Retaining Teachers, Unearthing Testing Fraud, Autism and Inclusion, The Perils of Innovation, Giving Teachers Choice

CONTRIBUTORS: DIANE RAVITCH, JOHN KAIN, JOHN BISHOP, DENIS DOYLE, ANN DYBVIK, DAVID FERRERO, RON HASKINS, BRIAN JACOB, STEVEN LEVITT, STEVEN RIVKIN, ERIC HANUSHEK

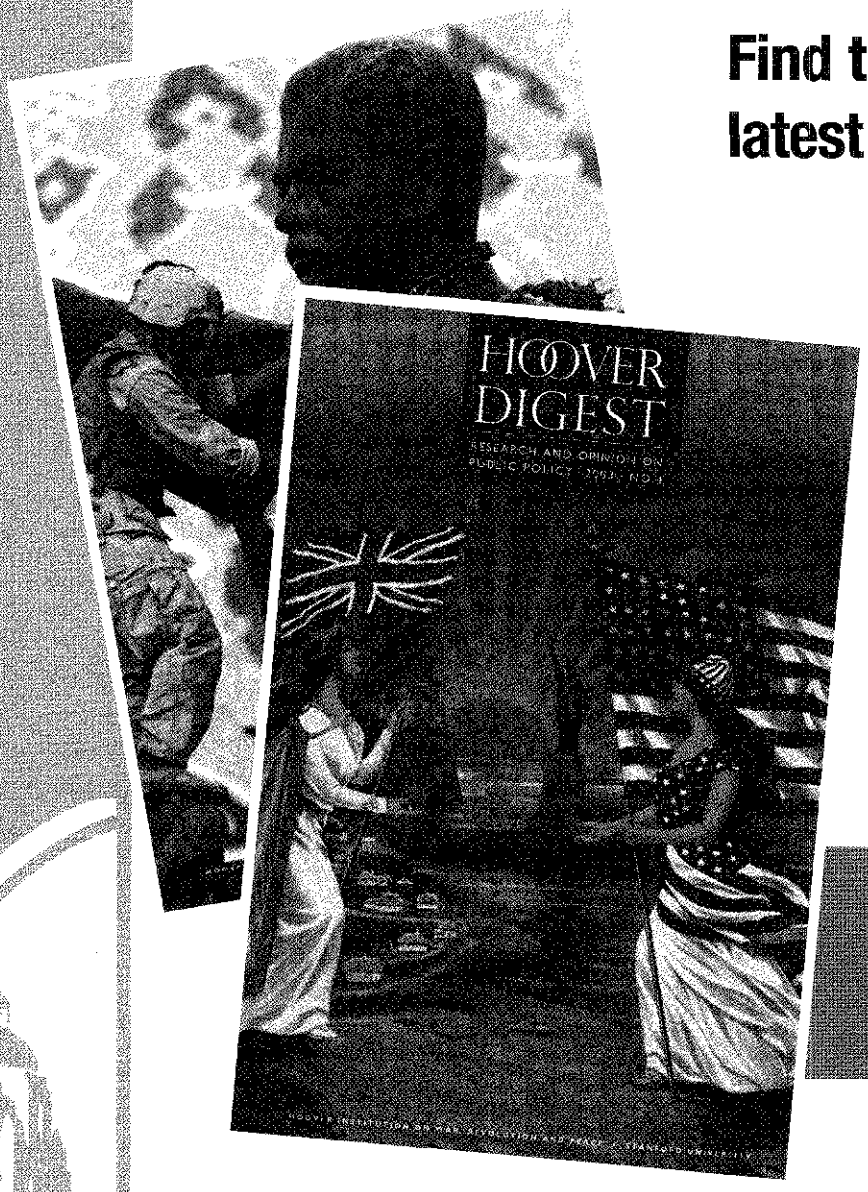
www.educationnext.org / $7.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How can we win the peace in Iraq?

Has the United States become an empire?

How can we fix our schools?



Find the answers in the latest *Hoover Digest!*

IN THE FALL ISSUE...

Iraq—Why the home front is more worrisome than the battlefield. By Victor Davis Hanson.

Why an American empire would be a good thing. By Paul Johnson.

What does Harry Potter have that our school textbooks don't? By Diane Ravitch

What can be done to restore order and sanity in America's executive suites? By Thomas J. Healey.

FREE ISSUE!

For a complimentary copy of the latest *Digest*, call

800.935.2882

Hoover Institution ...*ideas defining a free society*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1

EDUCATION next

A JOURNAL OF OPINION AND RESEARCH

26

42

50

forum

9 Fiscal Indiscipline

Why school districts can't downsize

Mounting Debt by JON FULLERTON *Academic Freedom* by WILLIAM G. OUCHI

features

26 Competing Visions

Head Start gets a makeover by RON HASKINS

34 Recycling Reforms

The Department of Education enters the innovation business by DIANE RAVITCH

42 Autism and the Inclusion Mandate

Daniel experiences the regular classroom by ANN CHRISTY DYBVIK

50 The Knowledge Guild

The tension between unions and professionals by DENIS P. DOYLE

56 Why Choice Is Good for Teachers

Ending the pedagogical holy wars by DAVID J. FERRERO

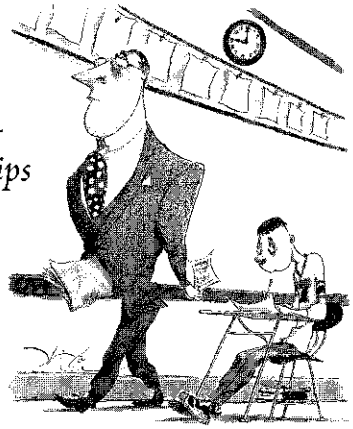
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1

EDUCATION next

A JOURNAL OF OPINION AND RESEARCH

features



62 Money and Motivation
Michigan links college scholarships to high-school results
by JOHN H. BISHOP

research

68 To Catch a Cheat
How to stop testing fraud
by BRIAN A. JACOB & STEVEN D. LEVITT

68

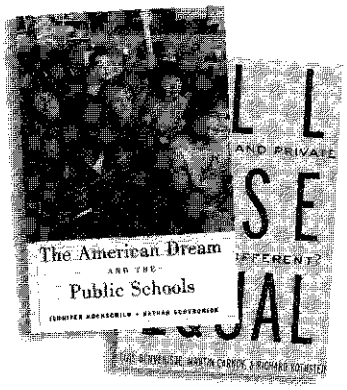
76 The Revolving Door
Why teachers leave by ERIC A. HANUSHEK, JOHN F. KAIN, & STEVEN G. RIVKIN

from the editors

3 The More You Have . . .

correspondence

5 *Vouchers in the courts; disabilities and the SAT; teacher pay*



83

book reviews

83 The American Dream and the Public Schools *by Jennifer Hochschild & Nathan Scovronick*
REVIEWED by WILLIAM A. GALSTON

84 All Else Equal: Are Public and Private Schools Different?
by Luis Benveniste, Martin Carnoy, & Richard Rothstein
REVIEWED by PAUL T. HILL

education matters to me

88 Ignoring Advice
by ROBERT MARANTO

88

COVER ILLUSTRATION *by Gordon Studer*

Editor-in-Chief: Paul E. Peterson
Senior Editor: Chester E. Finn Jr.
Executive Editors: Frederick M. Hess, Marci Kanstoroom
Research Editor: Martin West
Articles Editor: Tyce Palmaffy
Managing Editor: Carol Peterson
Design Director: John Sizing
Graphics Editor: Tammy Frisby
Consulting Editors: Patricia Baker, Jay P. Greene
Editorial Staff: Susan Pasternack, Deborah Styles
Web Editor: Bridgit Ahern
Circulation: Jennifer Presley
Editorial Board: John E. Chubb, Williamson Evers, Eric A. Hanushek, Paul Hill, E. D. Hirsch Jr., Caroline M. Hoxby, Terry M. Moe, Diane Ravitch, Herbert Walberg

Publisher: Hoover Institution, Leland Stanford Junior University

Additional Sponsoring Institutions: Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University; Thomas B. Fordham Foundation; Manhattan Institute for Policy Research

Subscriptions One-year subscription (four issues), $20 in the United States; $30 in Canada; $40 elsewhere. To subscribe or to submit change of address information, call us at (800) 935-2882; fax us at (650) 723-8626; visit us at www.educationnext.org; or email us at hooverpress@hoover.stanford.edu. You may also write to *Education Next* Subscriptions, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-6010. Cover price is $7/issue. ISSN 1539-9672

Advertising For information on advertising, contact Advertising Manager, Program on Education Policy and Governance, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 495-6954.

Letters We welcome letters about our contents. Longer versions of some letters may be found at www.educationnext.org. Write to Letters to the Editor, *Education Next*, 226 Littauer North Yard, 1875 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02138; fax to (617) 496-1507; or email Editor_EM@latte.harvard.edu.

Editorial Queries We consider unsolicited contributions. Send manuscript submissions as email attachments to Editor_EM@latte.harvard.edu. Pieces sent by regular mail go to Carol Peterson, *Education Next*, 226 Littauer North Yard, 1875 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Opinions expressed in *Education Next* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board of *Education Next*, the Board of Trustees of Leland Stanford Junior University, or the sponsors of *Education Next*.

Visit us at http://www.educationnext.org, where unabridged essays can be found.

© by the Board of Trustees of Leland Stanford Junior University, 2003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The More You Have . . .

Fiscal troubles plague the public schools

"The gloomiest fiscal picture in two decades is clouding" American education, shouts the *Boston Globe*. A union leader laments the "fiscal instability from the state, from the federal government, so that the supports aren't there for education." A school board member asserts, "You're going to have a bunch of shortchanged kids out there."

The media continually parrot the claims of widespread fiscal crises in the nation's school districts. Yet it's hard to square these jeremiads with the simple fact that, after adjusting for inflation, per-pupil spending today is nearly three times what it was in 1960—and that spending jumps were higher in the 1990s than ever before.

Where did all this money go? How do schools seem to sponge up every last dollar? Why have the extensive investments in technology done nothing to forestall budgetary train wrecks or to produce significant achievement gains? Why does every slowdown in the economy seem to wreak so much havoc among school officials?

School managers are, in effect, rewarded for overspending.

The authors of this issue's cover stories, political scientist **Jon Fullerton** and management professor **William Ouchi**, address these questions from different angles. **Fullerton** examines the politics of school budgeting and tells us that school managers are, in effect, rewarded for overspending. Moreover, they operate with primitive accounting systems that can serve to mask financial problems for years on end. Even the best financial officers are trapped by state, federal, and union mandates. Worse, the systems are so centralized, argues Ouchi, that they waste money on bureaucratic operations and lack the capacity to respond rapidly to changing circumstances.

In a few cases, school districts' problems are the result not of poor management but of something more serious. Taking a look at the rising problem of teacher cheating on tests of achievement, **Brian Jacob** and **Steven Levitt** have come up with an estimate of the extent of the problem in Chicago and have designed a technique that will help to bring the problem under better control. Fortunately, they show that 95 percent or more of the teachers in Chicago administer tests honestly to their students, a welcome testimony to the decency of the teaching profession.

In professions like law and medicine, the occasional bad seeds are weeded out by committees of their peers. If teachers would like to enjoy similar self-policing, argues **Denis Doyle**, they will need to jettison the tactics of industrial-style unionism in favor of organizations more like the medieval guilds. And teachers could further enhance their sense of professionalism, says **David Ferrero**, if they were able to create schools reflecting their pedagogical commitments. They might also be less inclined to leave such schools, since path-breaking research by **Eric Hanushek**, **Steven Rivkin**, and **John Kain** reveals that teachers' working conditions are more likely to determine whether they stay at a school—or even in the profession—than are their salaries. The essay is based on an extraordinary set of data collected in cooperation with the state of Texas under the leadership of John Kain, whose untimely death this past summer is mourned by his many friends in the educational research community.

This, the first issue of *Education Next*'s fourth year, also features **Ron Haskins**'s penetrating examination of Head Start's history, explaining why a program with such great promise has had so little success. Federal programs are also the focus of **Diane Ravitch**'s essay. Ravitch, the onetime head of the U.S. Department of Education's research and development efforts, warns the department's new Office of Innovation and Improvement not to be taken in by hucksters peddling the latest fad. Meanwhile, **John Bishop** highlights a promising innovation, Michigan's college scholarship program for students who perform well on state tests. And in one of *Education Next*'s most personal and moving essays, **Ann Christy Dybvik** traces an autistic boy's steps through the school day and examines the impact of the federal inclusion mandate on children with disabilities.

In publishing circles they say that a journal's third year is make-or-break. Thank you, readers, for joining us for a fourth.

—THE EDITORS

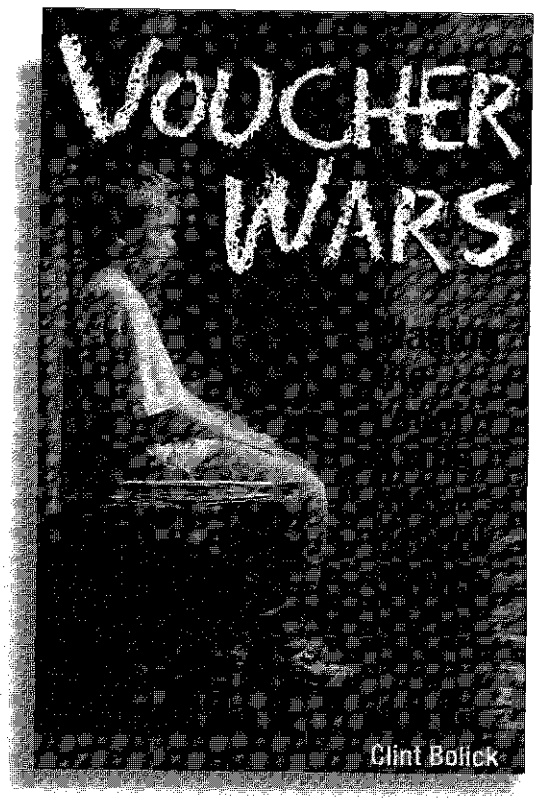
MISSION STATEMENT In the stormy seas of school reform, this journal will steer a steady course, presenting the facts as best they can be determined, giving voice (without fear or favor) to worthy research, sound ideas, and responsible arguments. Bold change is needed in American K-12 education, but *Education Next* partakes of no program, campaign, or ideology. It goes where the evidence points.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

As You Head Back to School

"An engaging memoir."
—National Review

"A true human interest tale."
—Milton Friedman



Clint Bolick, who led the 12-year legal battle for school choice from Milwaukee to the Supreme Court, tells that dramatic story in this highly readable book. Voucher Wars *takes you inside the courtrooms, exposes the obstacles to choice, and offers crucial lessons for future educational freedom battles.*

Price: $20.00 cloth/$12.00 paper
Cloth ISBN: 1-930865-37-6
Paper ISBN: 1-930865-38-4
200 pages

CATO INSTITUTE

To Order:
1-800-767-1241 www.cato.org
Available in bookstores nationwide.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

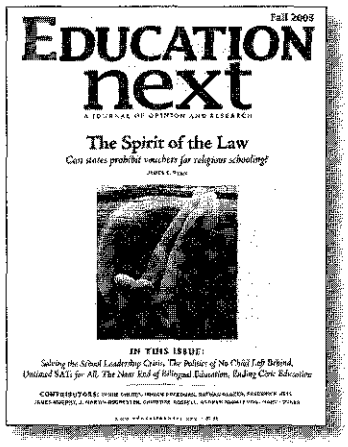
Vouchers in the courts

James E. Ryan provides a balanced and comprehensive description of the next round in the legal fight over vouchers ("The Neutrality Principle," *Feature*, Fall 2003). State constitutional provisions serve as the most immediate impediment to voucher programs that include religious schools. The assumption had long been that state courts are free to interpret their constitutions differently from the federal provisions, even if those interpretations diverge from federal holdings.

Zelman arguably undermines this presumption by intimating that there is no longer any justification for treating religious schools differently from their secular counterparts in indirect funding programs. However, one point that is missing from Ryan's otherwise comprehensive article is how a conservative court would reconcile its federalist inclinations with a holding that states cannot provide a "more spacious" conception of church-state separation. Only if the Establishment Clause represents both the floor and the ceiling of church-state relationships should states be barred from alternative approaches. A holding that states must march in lockstep with the federal experiment would have implications for other federalism issues, a point likely to be on the minds of the justices.

As Ryan notes, the most popular line of attack on these comprehensive state provisions is that they are based on the much-maligned Blaine amendment of 1876. Pro-funding groups argue that the federal Blaine amendment—which sought to prohibit public funding of sectarian schools—was nothing more than an exercise in Catholic bigotry. Because many state provisions were modeled after the failed amendment, the argument goes, they too are suspect in origin and effect.

Ryan's historical argument fails in two respects. First, the Blaine amendment was the capstone of a much larger controversy over the future of American public education. Funding of sectarian schools was only one aspect of the controversy, and anti-Catholicism a subset



thereof. While anti-Catholicism and opposition to parochial school funding motivated many Blaine amendment supporters, other people were motivated by a variety of concerns, not the least of which was whether there should be a federal role in education. Second, many state constitutional provisions were enacted for reasons that had nothing to do with anti-Catholicism. Several midwestern states enacted their constitutions with provisions preventing the funding of religious schools before the rise of organized nativism and long before the Blaine amendment. A recent review of the state constitutional conventions in Oregon (1857) and Washington (1889) for an amicus brief in *Locke v. Davey* revealed no evidence of anti-Catholic animus. As Ryan correctly concludes, the road to challenging these state provisions may be long and arduous, requiring a state-by-state review.

Steven K. Green
Willamette University College of Law
Salem, Oregon

The SAT

I was one of the two psychometricians on the panel that advised the College Board on the issue of whether the SAT scores of disabled students who take the test with accommodations should be "flagged" (see Miriam Kurtzig Freedman, "Disabling the SAT," *Feature*, Fall 2003). In my opinion, the decision to end the practice of flagging was the right one.

Standard testing conditions are problematic for many people with disabilities. This is why the College Board grants testing accommodations, such as extended time to finish the test. However, many people with disabilities do not want others to know about their disability. The practice of flagging SAT scores essentially informs college-admissions officers that the applicant has a disability. The opportunity for bias against the student is obvious.

There are two arguments in favor of flagging. The first is that providing an accommodation may give students with disabilities an unfair advantage. The second is that scores from accommodated test administrations are less valid than scores from standard administrations.

As Freedman argues, the current version of the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* can be interpreted to support the practice of flagging when information on the comparability of scores across standard and nonstandard test administrations is lacking. However, these standards also state: "If a modification is provided for which there is no reasonable basis for believing that the modification would affect score comparability, there is no need for a flag." Furthermore, the *Standards* are silent on the issue of where to draw the line between "comparability" and "noncomparability."

The College Board has sponsored more research on the effects of testing accommodations than any other organization in the world. The findings for the SAT show that students with disabilities perform much better when given accommodations such as extended time. Meanwhile, students without disabilities score only a little better when given an accommodation. The only evidence in support of "noncomparability" was for male students with learning disabilities who had extended time. Their first-year college GPAs were lower than the SAT predicted. However, this finding did not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hold for females with learning disabilities, and it was reduced when males' high-school grades were factored in. When evaluating the size of this "overprediction" for learning-disabled males, the majority panel noted that it was smaller than the overprediction for other groups of students, such as African-American males. The practice of flagging could not be supported by the relatively small effect noted just for learning-disabled males.

STEPHEN G. SIRECI
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

Miriam Kurtzig Freedman responds: I thank Stephen Sireci for his thoughtful letter. Nevertheless, I am not prepared to assume that college-admissions officers will be biased against applicants with disabilities. Neither the panel that voted to end flagging nor the College Board has presented any evidence to support this assumption.

Sireci writes that the only evidence of noncomparability is the "relatively small effect noted just for learning-disabled males" and concludes that this could not support the continued practice of flagging. Yet when the panel's two psychometricians asked themselves the key question—Are the scores from standard and nonstandard administrations of the test comparable?—one answered, "No," and Sireci answered, "Not sure." We still have no "reasonable basis" to believe the scores are comparable. Thus the College Board's decision to end flagging is difficult to reconcile with the evidence and the panel's own deliberations.

Licensing leaders

Frederick M. Hess seems obsessed with the need to establish a "deregulation" route to identify and prepare school leaders ("Lifting the Barrier," *Forum*, Fall 2003). His model seems to suggest that just about anyone with a master's degree, preferably in business administration, can provide leadership to schools and districts. This is truly a flawed concept in that a business executive, while having the requisite management and financial skills, has basically no knowledge of the learning process, adolescent psychology, curricular programs, and instructional strategies. Schools need leaders of instruction who have a broad repertoire of pedagogical skills that have been built through extensive school-based experiences.

GERALD N. TIROZZI
Executive Director
National Association of Secondary School Principals
Reston, Virginia

e-lead Leadership for Student Learning

A partnership of the Laboratory for Student Success and the Institute for Educational Leadership

www.e-lead.org

e-Lead provides free and ready access to programs, information and resources on principal professional development.

- Programming Principles
- Programs Database
- Leadership Library

IEL Institute for Educational Leadership

IF ...

Principal leadership is a major issue in your work...
You provide principal professional development support and services to school districts...
You are a principal concerned about the quality of your development plan and opportunities...

THEN ... visit www.e-lead.org.

BE SURE TO BOOKMARK THIS NEW WEB RESOURCE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

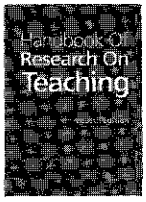
University-based programs in educational administration have been far too unselective in whom they admit and "train" for leadership roles. Those same programs, it should be pointed out, are too often undercapitalized and are expected to generate credit hours without many of the resources needed to foster quality programs. I agree that far too many programs in educational administration are disconnected from the real world of education practice. One simple illustration is the absence, in many programs, of any substantive work on assessment and accountability and of helping administrators learn how, in Marc Tucker's words, to "recognize the elements of sound standards-based classroom organization and practice."

Frederick Hess, however, sounds like far too many critics who suggest that the free-market approach is the answer. It seems so right to suggest that if you deregulate credentialing for administrators, they (the bright, the better educated, and the managerially savvy) will come. The authors even have anecdotal evidence to prove their point from places like Seattle and San Diego. But basing public policy on a broad deregulatory idea ignores the important difference between the education of our children and other public pursuits. Deregulation of such things as the telephone industry has brought more options, but has also engendered lots of problems. The consequences of broad deregulation of education are potentially more deleterious and far-reaching than may be evidenced in other public- and private-sector endeavors. I am convinced that the byproduct of deregulation via the Hess route will be further mediocrity with instances of excellence, which we already have.

THOMAS J. LASLEY II
Dean, School of Education
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio

Frederick M. Hess responds: Neither I nor any responsible reformer imagines that private-sector candidates are saviors or in possession of unique skills. The point is only that they ought to be judged on their ability and not blocked out by statutes or regulations. Gerald Tirozzi asserts the continued need for traditional courses in educational administration, despite the absence of evidence that these courses teach useful or necessary skills. He acknowledges the promise of performance-based licensure, but then calls for a continued regime of mandatory coursework. Such required seat time, of course, is the antithesis of licensure based on how well administrators serve children.

If we agree that educational administration programs don't provide the leaders we need, and if three decades of reform haven't made much difference, why is Thomas Lasley so confident that minor adjustments in



Handbook of Research on Teaching

Published by the American Educational Research Association in 2001

Editor: Virginia Richardson

Editorial Advisory Board: Lyn Corno, Mary Dilworth, Margaret Eisenhart, Robert Floden, Patricia Lather, Gaea Leinhardt, Robert Linn, Luis Moll, Hugh Munby, Fritz Oser, Marleen Pugach, Mark Smylie, and Kenneth Zeichner

4th Edition Includes 21st-Century Topics Order Your Copy Today!

The latest edition of the *Handbook of Research on Teaching* reflects current and sometimes competing schools of thought and presents exciting possibilities for educational research and writing. This 1,296-page *Handbook* explores the potential impact such work can have on fields beyond research on teaching.

A resource for students and scholars, the *Handbook* presents the robust field of research on teaching characterized by evolving research methodologies and strong, diverse conceptual frameworks. Ultimately, this research will inform practice-policy, school administration, teaching, instruction, and parenting. Above all, this educational research will speak to student learning and development in significant aspects of human life, including the cognitive, moral, physical, emotional, artistic, and social. The volume, with 51 chapters organized in eight sections, will guide educational practice and research in the 21st century.

To order visit
http://www.aera.net/products/handbooks/orderform.pdf

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

courses or programs will produce substantial change? If potential new applicants are less suited to school leadership positions than current leaders or are likely to "do harm," why does Lasley presume that they will be hired over conventional candidates? If he believes that district hiring officials are unwilling or unable to gauge ability, then we have identified a need for much more fundamental change in educational administration.

Hillsdale College Announces the Eighth Recipient of the $25,000

Henry Salvatori Prize For "Excellence in Teaching"

Each fall, Hillsdale College seeks nominations for the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching." This prize honors teachers in grades K-12 who are committed to rigorous standards and to a traditional, time-tested approach to education. Endowed by the late businessman and philanthropist Henry Salvatori, this competition is open to teachers in non-profit private and public schools who have employed the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide*. Winners receive a $25,000 cash award payable to their school.

DiAnne McClenahan, of Temecula Preparatory School in Winchester, California, is hereby named the recipient of the 2003 Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching."

The *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide* is an invaluable resource for teachers, administrators and parents who seek to educate their children in a well-balanced core of essential subjects. Based on the daily operation of Hillsdale Academy, the K-12 model school of Hillsdale College, the *Guide* contains information on curricula, supplementary reading, school culture and administrative policies. It is already in use at over 400 schools in all 50 states, as well as by countless home-schooling parents.

To learn more about the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching" or the *Hillsdale Academy Reference Guide*, call (800) 989-7323 or log on to www.hillsdale.edu/academy.

"The first year we were open, my fifth grade class ranked the highest in Riverside and San Diego Counties. What makes this even more interesting is that I do very little in preparing my class for the actual test. The Hillsdale framework proves to be strong enough to ready these students without extraneous worksheets that teach to the test."

DiAnne McClenahan
Fifth Grade Teacher
Temecula Preparatory School
Winchester, California

2003 Recipient of the Henry Salvatori Prize for "Excellence in Teaching"

Hillsdale COLLEGE

Hillsdale College • Hillsdale, Michigan 49242 • www.hillsdale.edu

Teacher pay

Richard Vedder points out that teachers are not paid as badly as everyone thinks ("Comparable Worth," *Forum*, Summer 2003). Unions like to use measures of annual salary, while Vedder suggests that hourly wages provide a more accurate gauge of teachers' pay. But neither is a very good unit of measure.

Teachers commonly work many more hours than the official time they spend in school because they typically prepare for class, grade exams, and perform other tasks outside the formally defined school day. In my experience, most teachers work as much as other professionals, about 50 hours per week.

The best unit is the number of contractual work days, which for teachers is typically about 182 days per year. The work year for most workers is 238 days. In other words, a teacher's annual salary is based on about 76 percent of a standard work year. Thus a teacher's salary of $45,000 translates into a full-year salary of $59,000.

T. Allen Lambert
Ithaca, New York

The Asian-white gap

Jens Ludwig ("The Great Unknown," *Check the Facts*, Summer 2003) raises a number of important questions about the U.S. Department of Education's study of the black-white test-score gap. But he ignores entirely the fact that their analysis and virtually all other studies on this matter are limited by the fact that the test scores of African-Americans were measured only against whites. Asian-Americans are a smaller minority than blacks, but outperform both whites and blacks in school. Asians should be included in the data to ascertain why this group has such a great academic advantage; one reason is perhaps their tight-knit traditional family structure.

Steve Fellows
Seattle, Washington

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jon Fullerton thinks the problem is more political than financial page 10

William Ouchi details the benefits of decentralization page 20

FISCAL Indiscipline

Why school districts can't downsize

When the economy's bubble burst and tax receipts began to plunge, many a school district found itself bleeding red ink. Even districts that seemed healthy discovered gaping holes in their budgets—holes that antiquated accounting systems and poor financial management helped to mask.

Meanwhile, a movement to decentralize budgeting decisions to the school level has taken hold in a number of districts including Edmonton, Houston, and Seattle. Coupled with school choice, decentralization promises to encourage innovation while reducing the need for large, expensive central-office staffs. Here too, however, even reform-minded districts find it difficult to furlough employees or to redistribute resources.

In the following pages, political scientist Jon Fullerton and business professor William Ouchi discuss the political and organizational obstacles school districts face in trying to manage their finances and promote efficiency.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVE CUTLER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mounting DEBT

The long economic boom enabled school districts nationwide to fund expensive reforms and hefty pay raises. Now, however, they are finding it nearly impossible to cut costs and balance their budgets. What makes it so tough for districts to downsize?

by JON FULLERTON

In April 2003, Joseph Olchefske, a nationally recognized reformer, announced his intention to resign as superintendent of the Seattle Public Schools. Surprisingly, given his background in investment banking and his previous experience as the school district's chief financial officer, Olchefske was felled by a financial crisis. In the fall of 2002, the school district had discovered an unexpected $23 million deficit for the previous fiscal year. The district was on track to ledger another $12 million deficit for the 2002–03 fiscal year.

About a month later, Dennis Chaconas was fired as superintendent of the Oakland, California, public schools. New software, installed so that the school district could better understand its finances, had uncovered a $40 million deficit from the previous year. The deficit for the current year was expected to be equally large. To keep the district solvent, the state of California provided a $100 million line of credit and took over the district's operations, stripping the school board of all but advisory powers and appointing an administrator to replace Chaconas. Although Oakland had long been known as a troubled school district, it had appeared to be moving in the right direction under Chaconas. Teacher turnover was down and test scores were up.

Unlike the financial chicanery that doomed corporate titans like Enron and WorldCom (now MCI), intentional corruption does not seem to have been behind either of these crises. Deliberate malfeasance has played a role in many a school district's financial distress (as in Compton, California), but Seattle and Oakland fell into difficulty

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while they seemed to be on the upswing. Why can even school districts that are apparently healthy suddenly find themselves on the verge of insolvency? This question will become increasingly urgent in the coming months, given the grim budget outlook that most states are facing. The problem is particularly acute in California (the primary focus of this article), where the state government, which largely dictates K–12 spending, is in the midst of a financial crisis.

The specific path to financial distress is, of course, unique in each case. Any number of factors, from excessively generous concessions at the bargaining table to a fiscal crisis at the state level, can throw a district into financial turmoil. The common way of dealing with these crises is to focus on the immediate causes of financial distress and to treat them as a straightforward management problem. However, such crises are more properly understood as the result of underlying political and legal realities that prevent districts from managing their finances properly.

Four general factors can interact to create financial instability. First, the dynamics of public funding and the budgeting process encourage school districts to spend their entire funding allocation, creating a cost structure that is difficult to adjust down when revenue drops or fails to grow at an expected rate. Second, districts are constrained in how they can spend money and in the financial engineering options open to them. Third, the lack of attention afforded to the nuts and bolts of financial management in K–12 public education can result in naïve oversight and inadequate management-information systems that can delay appropriate responses to emerging financial crises. Finally, school district finances are lodged within a larger political environment. Politicians and state officials may find ways to help push districts over the financial edge in order to accomplish their own purposes.

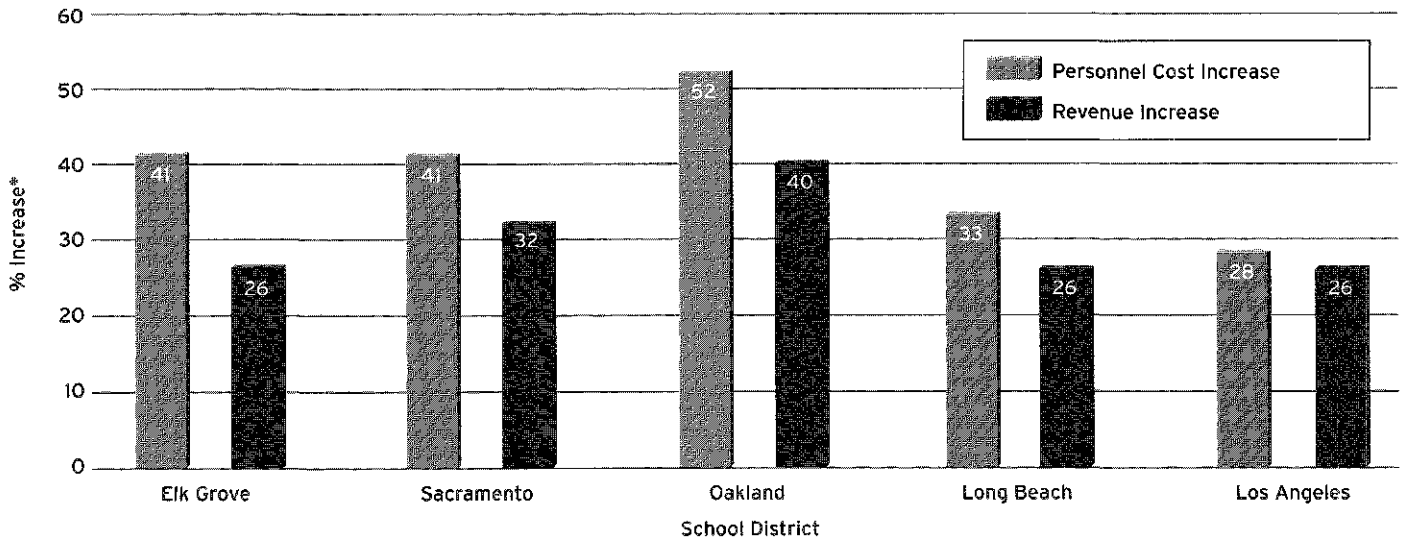
The Downsides of Incrementalism

Given that school districts largely do not have to face the vagaries of "selling" their services to fickle consumers, one might think that balancing the budget would be fairly straightforward. Not so. The typical district has a budgeting process that results in its permanently "living on the edge," with revenues just matching costs. When hard times arrive, it is difficult for districts to adjust for a variety of reasons.

The first reason is the use of *incremental budgeting*. That is, school districts generally determine their current year's budget by taking the previous year's budget and adding or subtracting incremental spending to each major item. By contrast, *zero-based budgeting* asks managers to examine the services they are required to deliver and then build up their cost structure from scratch. Another strategy, *activity-based costing* and its derivatives, separates the costs of various activities within a business. Then, by looking at external benchmarks

Soaking Up Revenues (Figure 1)

When school districts face a rosy financial picture, they tend to spend any additional revenues on higher salaries and more teachers rather than saving money for a rainy day. In California, many of the state's largest school districts saw increases in personnel and revenue costs that exceeded their increases in enrollment.



*** Increases from 1996–97 school year to 2001–02 school year. Cost and revenue increases are calculated per average daily attendance to adjust for changes in enrollment. They are also adjusted for inflation.**

SOURCE: California Department of Education

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

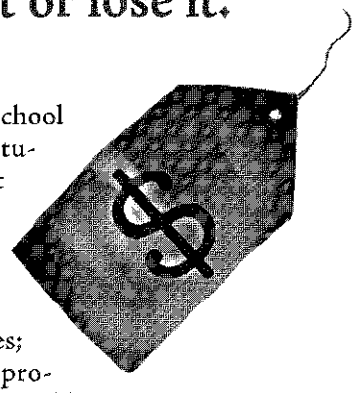
School districts are reluctant to generate surpluses because, like most government agencies, they must "use it or lose it."

and generating ideas internally, managers search for ways to reduce the costs of these activities while delivering the same level of service (if such a level of service is even needed). The goal of using these budgeting methods is to ensure that the organization aligns its costs with its strategy and most valuable activities.

The downsides of the incremental approach are obvious when they are compared with methods that are more tightly focused on value. Making piecemeal changes to district priorities through a fragmented series of increments based on last year's budget will not ensure that the organization is carrying out the strategically correct activities or that it is executing them in a cost-effective manner. Thus when cuts need to be made, in the name of "fairness" they are often imposed as flat percentage cuts to each department across the board, ignoring both the relative efficiency and the relative importance of various departments. This method in fact provides an incentive for inefficiency: the fatter a department gets, the better it can survive the inevitable budget cycles.

Nevertheless, as the political scientist Aaron Wildavsky pointed out years ago, the incremental approach has a lot going for it in the governmental sphere. First, it is simpler than the other approaches. Large urban school districts are complex, multilevel organizations with hundreds of sources of revenue, each with its own set of requirements and constraints. During the 2001–02 school year, the Los Angeles Unified School District received funding from well over 200 federal and state grants and entitlement programs. Any attempt at zero-based budgeting would require decisionmakers to understand and work within the constraints imposed by these funding streams, each of which is typically earmarked for a specific group of students or a particular school program. Much of the remaining money is devoted to salaries, largely for teachers. In short, most of the school district's funding is already spoken for. This makes zero-based budgeting or even activity-based costing almost pointless from a budget officer's point of view, since so little of a district's funds are available for reallocation.

These value-oriented reviews can also be dangerous for managers in the public sphere to undertake. School boards and superintendents are justifiably hesitant to mobilize too many stakeholders against them at once by saying, "Let's rethink our whole approach." In normal years, the incremental approach enables district leaders to limit the political stresses around budgeting by focusing on a few specific changes. As a result, the incremental approach is likely to lead a long and healthy life in school district budgeting. Unfortunately, this also means that school districts will be exposed to all the flaws of incrementalism: spending patterns that are poorly aligned to strategic priorities; fragmented educational programs; and little ability to quickly restructure resources across departments and schools.



Use It or Lose It

School districts also face strong incentives to spend their entire funding allocation in any given year. In the private sector, profits are good. They can be used to grow the business, to provide a cushion during downturns, or to reward investors. School districts, however, are reluctant to generate surpluses (the public sector's analogue for profits). Like most government agencies, school districts operate under conditions of "use it or lose it." The assumption is that if they don't spend the money, they didn't need it. Even if a school district were to control its costs enough to generate a significant surplus, the extra funds would immediately become a target for outside interests. Large surpluses suggest to politicians that too much money is being put into the schools and to unions that too little is being paid to teachers.

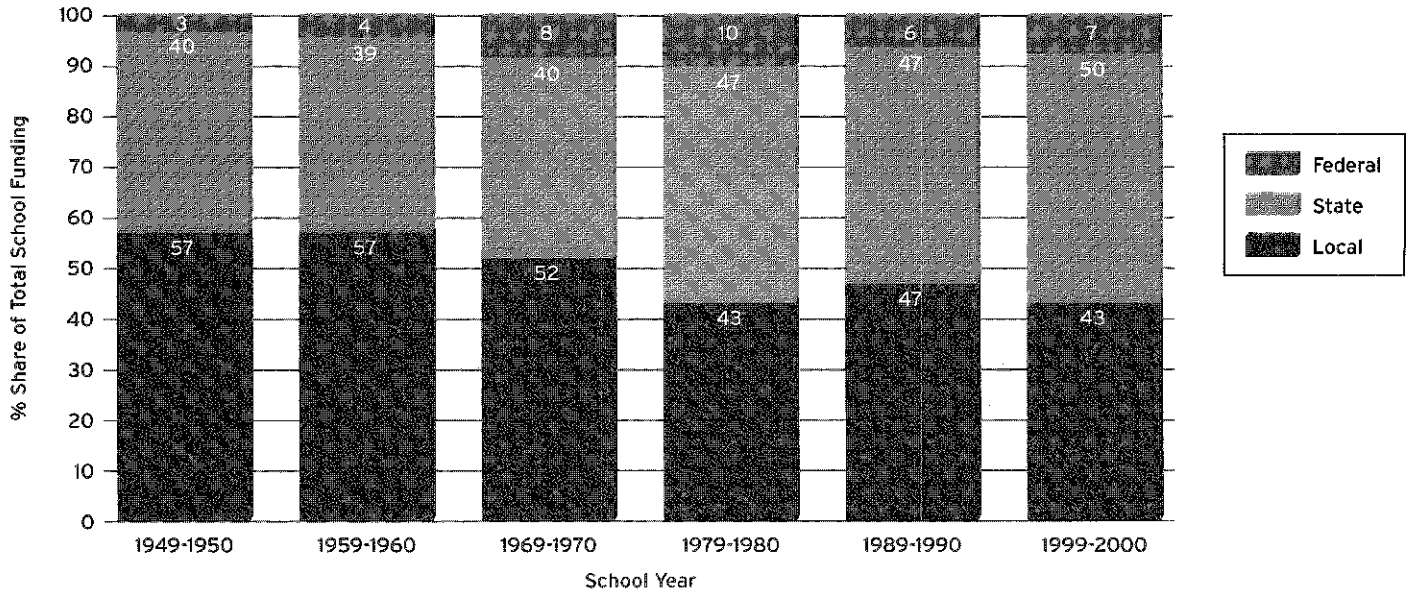
For instance, in 2002, after a spring of difficult cost-cutting, administrators in Los Angeles discovered that the school district had a substantially larger ending balance than projected. The union saw this as proof that the district could afford raises for teachers and that some unpopular budget cuts, such as increases in class size, were unnecessary. In the spring of 2003, union-backed candidates ousted two incumbent school board members. This was the result of several factors, but the previous year's budget cuts and unexpectedly large ending balance played a significant role in mobilizing the union. It is thus little wonder that districts attempt to "kiss" a zero or a statutorily established minimum balance every year.

The most popular way of soaking up excess revenues is to increase salaries and to hire additional school personnel, especially in districts that have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers. Thus in June 2000, during the best of financial times for California, the Oakland school district gave teachers a 24 percent salary increase (in addition to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Decline of Local Funding (Figure 2)

Nationwide, the movement to equalize spending between wealthy and poor school districts has shifted the funding of public education from the local to the state level. Thus districts are now dependent on a more volatile source of revenue, making it increasingly difficult to keep their budgets balanced.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

normal step increases). While increasing teachers' salaries pleases teachers and their unions, hiring additional teachers makes class sizes more manageable, pleasing parents and teachers alike. Moreover, reductions in class size are at times encouraged by the state through significant financial support, as in California. As a result, districts' personnel costs tend to keep pace with growth in district revenues. For example, during the five-year period from 1996–97 to 2001–02, increases in personnel costs outstripped increases in district revenues in 14 of the 20 largest California school districts (see Figure 1). While such changes are politically popular and can improve a district's ability to recruit qualified teachers, they are difficult to reverse. Personnel costs are notoriously "sticky"—easy to increase but hard to reduce.

Slippery Revenues

The problem with building up costs to match revenues is that school districts do not generate their own revenues and cannot control their service obligations.

At one time, the majority of school funds came from the local community in the form of property taxes. The movement to equalize spending among rich and poor communities changed all that. In 1950 localities provided about 57 percent of the revenues available to school districts. By 2000 their share had dropped to 43 percent (see Figure 2). Even this significantly understates the decline in local influence over school district revenues. Many states, including California, Florida, and Texas, either place caps on local property-tax rates or redistribute property-tax receipts when they exceed a certain level. Localities cannot simply raise property-tax rates to the level they feel is necessary to fund the schools.

The situation has reached an extreme in California. First, the California Supreme Court's 1971 *Serrano* decision required the state to make school spending between rich and poor districts more equitable. Second, Proposition 13, which the voters passed in 1978, placed a cap on property taxes. Finally, in 1988, Proposition 98 required the state to spend a minimum amount of the general fund on education. As a result, the share of school spending from local revenues dropped from 62 percent in 1970 to 31 percent in 2000 (see Figure 3). With no real power over revenues, local school boards in California face little incentive to conserve on costs as a means to lower tax rates.

K–12 education is the largest line item in most state budgets, representing 22 percent of total state spending and more than a third of general fund expenditures (money that comes from state taxes and is not earmarked for specific purposes). Thus school district funding is tied to the sources of state general funds—typically receipts from sales taxes and income taxes. In turn, these receipts are closely tied to state economic conditions, even more closely than property taxes are. Therefore, when states face significant deficits, funding for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The most popular way of soaking up excess revenues is to increase salaries and to hire additional school personnel.

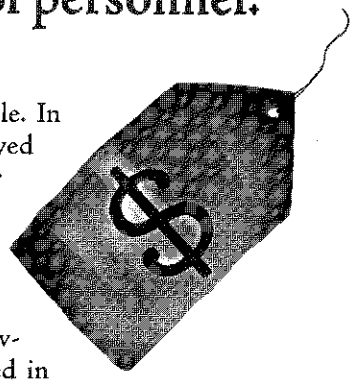
education must be cut. And, unlike some other government agencies, which can choose to reduce services by letting roads go unpaved, releasing prisoners early, or turning away indigents in search of health care, the schools cannot simply stop educating kids. They must serve all students within their area, and they have a multitude of mandates they must fulfill whatever their funding situation.

When an economic downturn hits, school districts suffer revenue cuts, but cutting costs is difficult. The typical district spends more than 80 percent of its revenues on salaries and benefits, and salaries tend to ratchet only one way—up. In addition, as Michael Podgursky recently noted in these pages (see "Fringe Benefits," *Check the Facts*, Summer 2003), districts often provide generous defined-benefit plans to both current employees and retirees. With double-digit annual increases in health-care expenses, the relative cost of benefits to school districts can be expected to rise substantially. What's more, many school districts have almost unlimited obligations to provide health benefits to their retirees. In 2002, the Los Angeles school district had estimated liabilities of $4.8 billion in unfunded benefits for its current and future retirees, an amount greater than the value of its net assets.

A final complexity in the district budgeting process comes from its timing. Many school districts are required to settle on a budget before they know what their revenue will be. In the spring of 2003, due to a large projected deficit and the difficult cuts it implied, the state of California had not adopted a budget by July 1, the deadline for school districts to turn in their budgets—budgets that are based, theoretically, on the funding elucidated in the state budget. This places a further brake on school boards' ability to cut costs aggressively. It can be hard for board members to justify taking political heat for unpopular cuts before knowing exactly how large the revenue gap will be.

When a Dollar Is Not a Dollar

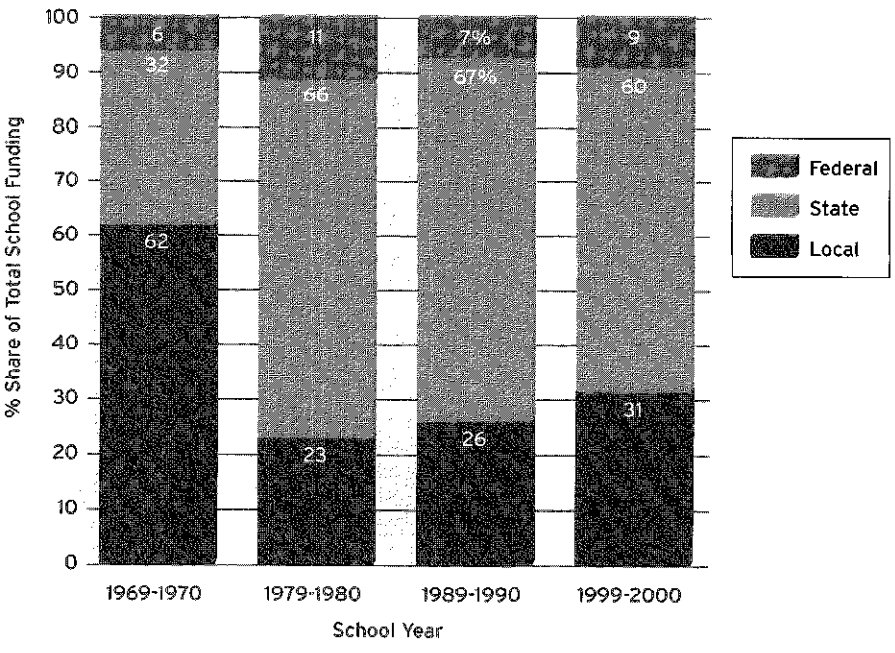
One of the fundamental principles of financial management in the private sector is that money is fungible. In other words, a dollar received as revenue from a customer can be used for many things. Part of it pays for the good or service received by the customer. But the profit from that revenue may also be reinvested in the company or paid out to shareholders and to the firm's employees.



By contrast, large public school districts receive a substantial portion of their revenues in the form of categorical or restricted funds. Each of these revenue streams has strict limitations on how the money can be spent. For instance, federal Title I funding for compensatory education must be spent only on low-performing students, unless the entire school qualifies as a Title I school. From the legislator's point of view, this makes perfect sense: legislation was enacted and programs

The California Experience (Figure 3)

The famed Proposition 13 placed a cap on local property taxes in California—just one reason why the local share of school funding was cut in half between 1970 and 2000.

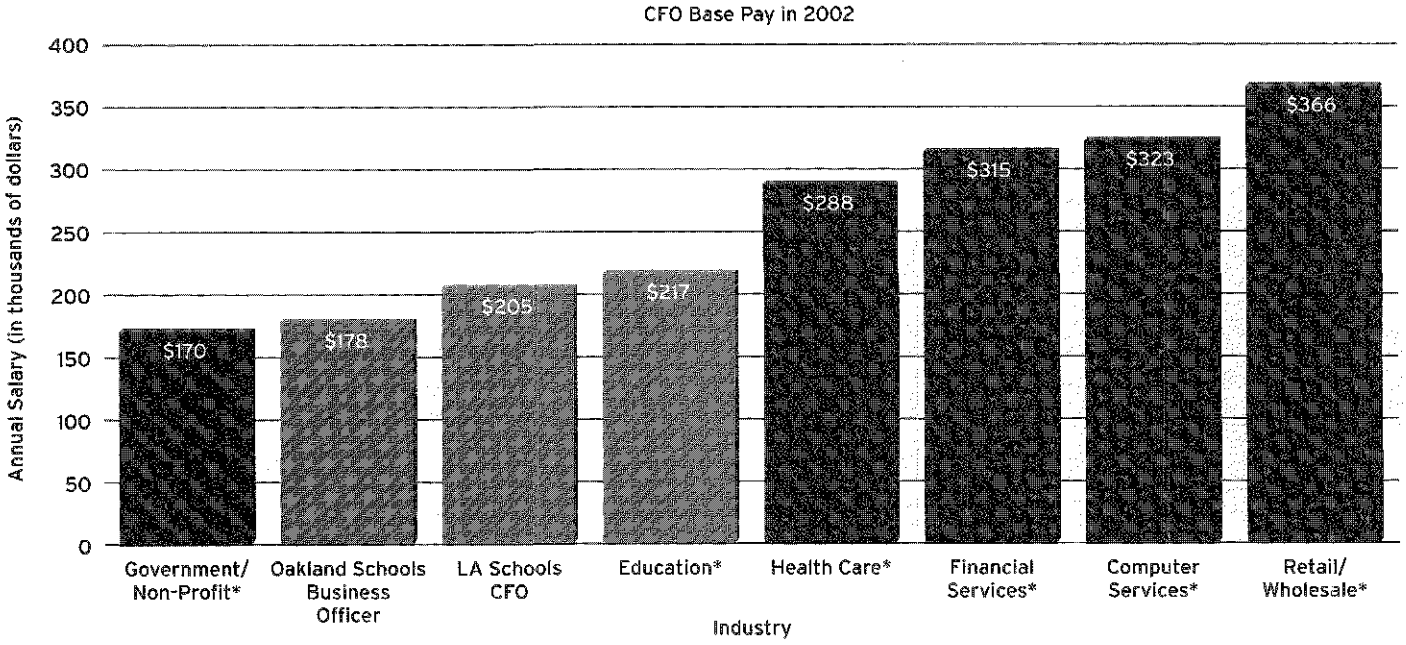


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lacking Financial Talent (Figure 4)

Skilled financial managers can earn substantially more in the private sector than they can working for a school district, creating a dearth of talent in the business department that can lead to sloppy financial controls.



*** Nationwide average for industry. Education average is primarily for higher education.**

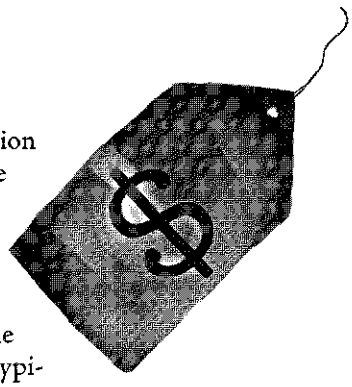
SOURCE: Tim Reason, "Facing the Bear: The 2002 Compensation Survey," CFO.com, November 1, 2002. Source data from Mercer Human Resources Consulting, Oakland Unified School District, and Los Angeles Unified School District

created with the intent of targeting a particular group or solving a particular problem. Such monies are intended to "supplement, not supplant" existing district expenditures.

District managers, however, are faced with a crazy quilt of funding streams for purposes that match the district's strategic priorities only by happenstance, if at all. In order to achieve the district's goals, good managers will attempt to find ways to use categorical and restricted monies that are not in line with the district's aims to free up other funds that can then be used to pursue its priorities.

The result is what I will call the "dance of supplantation." District managers attempt to use restricted, categorical funding to free up unrestricted, general-fund monies while the providers of revenue attempt to prevent them from doing so. Managers performing this dance with too much gusto can suddenly find they have danced over a cliff. Money they were counting on being able to use might be withheld. Worse, money they have already spent may need to be paid back. For instance, in 1991 the Richmond Unified School District in California went bankrupt. One of the contributing factors was superintendent Walter Marks's overly aggressive repurposing of funds. The district found that it had to repay the state for $4 million that had been earmarked for desegregation efforts and then inappropriately spent.

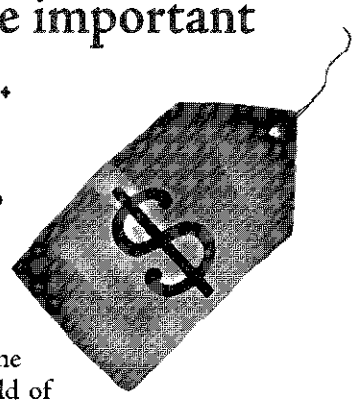
On average, more than 80 percent of a district's spending is on salaries and benefits, and such expenses tend to ratchet only one way—up.



The dance of supplantation takes on special importance when districts enter times of financial crisis. Unlike private businesses, where a surplus in one division can provide cash for the whole company, districts cannot typi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the world of education, the ability to provide "instructional leadership" is considered more important than mere financial management.



cally use, say, their surplus nutrition funds to pay for instruction, or vice versa. During the recent financial crisis in Oakland, one of the strategies proposed by the board and superintendent was to repurpose bond monies intended for construction to the general fund, in repayment for general-fund monies already spent for construction. Perhaps not surprisingly, the state attorney general disallowed this maneuver. This took away Oakland's last alternative to a state loan and takeover.

In California, districts are further constrained in that they do not have full access to their reserves. Districts are required to deposit reserves with their local counties to prevent them from foolishly investing the funds. (Until 1994, nothing prevented the counties from making foolish investments. That's when Orange County lost its school districts' funds as well as its own after a series of highly speculative trades plunged the county into bankruptcy.) In addition, some special funds held by the county, such as workers' compensation, cannot be used for other purposes once the district has paid into them. So even if a district has overfunded a particular reserve, it does not have access to that money in times of need. While this eliminates the temptation to raid funds for short-term gain, it also places limits on districts' financial flexibility. When a district finds itself in financial trouble, it must respond with one hand tied behind its back.

The Perils of Instructional Leadership

While the budgeting and finance issues discussed above make it easy for districts to get into financial trouble, poor financial management skills among district staff and incomplete information flow can turn what would have been a painful budget-cutting exercise into insolvency.

It begins at the top. While public companies can ensure that their boards of directors are stocked with financial know-how, this is not possible for elected school boards. As a result, many school boards lack basic financial literacy. The complicated structuring of district revenues and the lack of single, consolidated financial reports further undermine board members' ability to monitor the financial situation. Finally, the frequent turnover of boards and superintendents limits institutional memory. Any expertise board members have accumulated is lost as they move on.

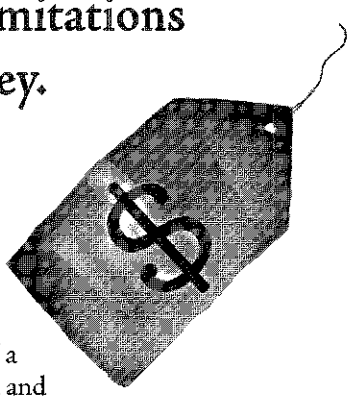
Moreover, boards tend to hire superintendents who may not have a deep level of financial expertise themselves. In the private sector, CEOs are expected both to provide strategic direction for a company and to ensure that the finances are in order. Business leaders would scoff at the idea that the financial side of a business should be isolated from the production side. In the world of education, however, the ability to provide "instructional leadership" is considered separate from and more important than mere financial management. This can result in weak financial oversight. Dennis Chaconas, the former superintendent in Oakland, admitted that he relied on others to deal with the financial aspects of the district. "I concentrated on academics," he told the *Oakland Tribune*. "I thought that was the most important issue facing the district." In Seattle, Moss Adams Advisory Services, brought in to determine what went wrong, noted that the explicit "kids first" focus of the district resulted in an organizational culture that did not take financial management seriously enough—despite the superintendent's considerable experience with finance. Such an environment can result in middle managers not being held accountable, even if they fail to stay within budget or to make needed cuts.

Compounding the naïveté of top management can be a general dearth of talent in the business departments themselves. While there are many fine CFOs and business managers in America's school districts, the overall pool of talent in the finance department is not comparable to the private sector. The reasons are not hard to discern. First, many critical business managers in large school systems rose into these positions "through the ranks" and may have started out in an unrelated position, such as teacher or principal. While such an organic process of "growing your own" can result in strong employees who know the specific issues and details of their district, these employees have not been exposed to approaches outside of the closed world of education and have not gone through the professional crucible of working for a large accounting firm, as many private-sector managers do. As a result these administrators may inherit inefficient and tremendously outdated processes with no clear ideas on how to improve them.

Second, it is not even clear why business managers from the private sector would want to work for a school district. As discussed above, financial management (and human-resources management and information-technology management) is typically not considered a "core" activity for a district. Moreover,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Federal and state education funding tends to come with regulations that impose far too many limitations on how districts can spend their money.



it is often politically difficult to pay such managers substantially more than managers on the instructional side of the district. The result is that good business managers can get a lot more money doing the same job outside of the public school system (see Figure 4). This is not true of even the finest teachers, who would be hard pressed to find a similar teaching job at a greater salary outside of a public school. Unless and until school districts are willing to pay competitive salaries, we can expect them to be short on business talent.

Since information technology is not considered a core activity either, large school districts are notorious for having antiquated information systems. Large private companies with thousands of employees will typically have accounting and personnel systems that connect the budget to ongoing financials to human resources to operations to sales. The technology behind such systems is generally based on a few standard platforms (SAP, PeopleSoft, Oracle) and installed by a major IT service provider (IBM Global Services, Accenture).

School districts, however, often have multiple, cobbled-together systems developed over a long period of time and based on nonstandard architecture. As a result, budgeting systems do not connect automatically with accounting systems, and both may be isolated from the human-resources systems that track who is hired, when, and for how much. The combination of weak financial expertise and outdated IT systems results in problems being uncovered late and critical degrees of freedom being lost. Unless departments devote substantial time and effort to coordinating data flow, it is easy for the number of people hired to exceed the number of positions in the budget. Overspending can continue undetected for months. Oakland provides a dramatic example of this, discovering that it was in trouble only after it was already $40 million in the hole. At this point, Oakland was already underwater and, unless the district were able to free up other restricted monies, it would ultimately need a bailout.

The fix is to install newer and more-integrated IT systems. This can be quite expensive (potentially more than $100 million for the largest districts) and is an easy political target. Interested parties might want to spend the money required on teacher salaries rather than on expensive new systems for the district bureaucrats.

The Usefulness of Insolvency

School districts are unavoidably part of a larger political environment. Cities, counties, and state legislators and regulators all have political interests in the schools that may or may not line up with the interests of a school district's current board and management. In fact, these outside actors might secretly applaud a district's financial collapse because of the opportunities it creates.

Although some states have "academic bankruptcy" laws, it is difficult for a district to be taken over for failure of its education system. This is because many factors aside from the quality of a school district contribute to students' academic performance. Financial mismanagement, however, is much more clear-cut. If a district cannot make payroll or pay its bills, its operations will cease unless someone steps in to provide the needed liquidity. Since schools cannot simply stop operating, as a business would, state or county governments find themselves having to step in to provide a loan to the district. This hands politicians a much more palatable excuse to take over a district than "academic bankruptcy." Allowing a district management team that has already shown questionable financial judgment to continue in office would put state monies directly at risk.

For instance, in 1995 the Illinois legislature handed the governance of Chicago schools to the mayor at least partly as a result of a massive deficit. Newark, Cleveland, Compton, Detroit, East St. Louis, and Philadelphia have all been the subjects of outside intervention in which fiscal mismanagement was one of the arguments for action. For those in favor of significant changes to district governance or management, bankruptcy can be a good thing.

What Is to Be Done?

Using bankruptcy or severe deficit spending as a tool for gaining control of schools is, unfortunately, quite expensive for the state and for the students. Either the state or the district will have to make up the deficit, and the bankrupt school district will find itself even more financially constrained than before, with today's students receiving fewer resources on account of yesterday's mistakes. So what can be done to prevent such occurrences in the future?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

First it is important to understand that most of the problems discussed here have been structural issues resulting from how school systems are governed and regulated. As long as school board members are elected, we cannot guarantee that districts will have either the knowledge or the will to manage their finances well. We also cannot eliminate the multitude of political interests and pressures that shape budgeting decisions. Given this situation, there is a set of realistic reforms that states and districts could undertake right now, as well as deeper reforms that would change the very structure of school districts and thus get closer to the roots of the problem.

Let me discuss the more realistic reforms. First, the state and federal finance systems for schools tend to be too complex and impose far too many limitations on how districts can spend their money. The current move toward block grants by state and federal agencies is a welcome one, as it has the potential to allow districts sufficient flexibility to pursue their strategic goals and to reallocate money as needed.

Second, board members should demand of their superintendents both instructional leadership *and* financial expertise. District leaders should also undertake the appropriate training to make themselves better financial managers. In addition, the leadership should bring in independent outside financial and business experts to monitor district finances *before* a crisis erupts. States can help districts in this process by requiring financial training for new school board members.

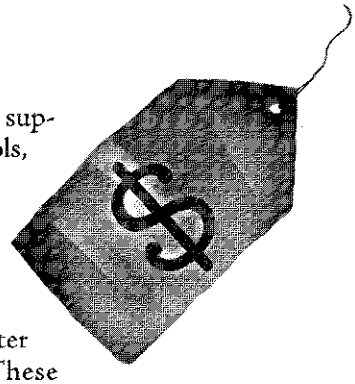
After receiving the appropriate training and hearing from outside experts, school district officials might end the practice of "starving" their business functions in order to focus on instruction and would install IT systems that provided adequate surveillance of the overall operations of the district. These systems should reliably track revenues, positions, and spending on a timely basis.

Finally, districts should develop robust multiyear financial projections and contingency plans that clearly specify how the district will adjust if expected funding does not come through. The projections should incorporate accurate (as opposed to ad hoc or historical) projections of students and staffing requirements. Contingency plans should be made part of salary negotiations.

Now let's look at some deeper, more structural reforms that could lessen the likelihood of financial crises. First, appointed (as opposed to elected) school boards would eliminate *some* of the multitude of political interests and pressures that shape budgeting decisions. While such boards certainly provide no guarantee of solvency, whoever appoints the board could ensure that there is an adequate amount of financial know-how present. Of course, such boards also represent a dramatic step away from the relatively direct democratic control of schools that predominates now and that many communities prize. A turn towards appointed boards would be a major, and hotly contested, shift.

Second, choice-based reforms such as charter schools and vouchers, if thoroughly implemented (and combined with more rational state funding), could eliminate a significant amount of the complexity associated with district finances. Each school would need to balance only its own budget. In addition, the closer connection between schools and parents could counteract the upward pressure that special interests exercise on the budget. Most important, individual school-level governance would lower the consequences of financial failure. Unlike school districts, individual schools that pursued only "instructional leadership" to the detriment of fiscal stability could simply go out of business, their place taken by more responsible peers. Unfortunately, if the state does not fund such reforms at the appropriate level or ensure some level of competence on the part of suppliers before they open schools, there may not be enough responsible peers available to pick up the slack.

Appointed, as opposed to elected, school boards would eliminate *some* of the multitude of political pressures that shape budgeting decisions.



Of course, a lot more is at stake in each of these structural reforms than better financial management. These reforms will not (and should not) be judged solely on this one dimension, and their political palatability varies dramatically across the country. However, as long as school boards are elected and school districts are political battlegrounds, it will be difficult to ensure that school systems manage their finances responsibly.

–Jon Fullerton is a vice president of the Urban Education Partnership, based in Los Angeles, California.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

academic FREEDOM

The typical urban school district's personnel and budgeting systems leave principals without much say in hiring teachers or allocating resources. The decentralization movement may just change that

The Los Angeles Unified School District is the second largest school system in the nation—and perhaps the worst. Slightly less than half of its 75,000 employees are classroom teachers, meaning that Los Angeles spends just 35 percent of its budget on teacher pay. By comparison, the school systems in Houston, Texas, and Edmonton, in the Canadian province of Alberta, spend 49 percent and 56 percent, respectively, of their budgets on teachers. Since 1980, Los Angeles Unified's enrollment has grown by 180,000 students, but the district has added only 15 schools with a total of 20,000 seats. As a result, nearly 200,000 students must be bused to a distant campus while most attend multitrack, year-round schools that can push more students through but offer 17 fewer days of instruction.

Although elementary schoolers in Los Angeles have made real gains in literacy in recent years, among high-school students, only 23 percent in reading and 34 percent in math meet or exceed the national norm on the Stanford 9. Of the district's teachers, 27 percent lack full credentials. The system has a chronic shortage of qualified principals.

If Los Angeles is the worst school district in America, its East Coast cousin, New York City, is a close second. And the Chicago schools, while improving, are still recovering from the day in 1988 when William J. Bennett, secretary of education in the Reagan administration, pronounced *them* the "worst in the nation." Why are these three school systems in such deep disarray? Certainly not because they are the three largest. None of them has more than a fraction of IBM or Toyota's work force, and those companies are icons of good management. Nor is it because they serve high percentages of minority children from low-income families. Houston's schools, which are equally minority and poor, perform well relative to other urban school districts. The reason is that the school districts in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago are too centralized, much too top-down in their management, for their size.

To be fair, I have not studied every school district in America, and I cannot prove that these three are the worst. However, I have studied these three in depth, along with several others that have managed to achieve true decentralization. As a business school professor, I have also spent 30 years studying the largest companies in the United States, and it's clear that any organization as big as these must be truly decentralized or it will fail. A series of business-focused studies has established

by WILLIAM G. OUCHI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

firmly that organizations with more than about 3,000 employees have fully developed bureaucratic structures with high overhead costs, many specialist staff positions, and extensive sets of rules. Studies by Alfred Chandler and Oliver Williamson have demonstrated that such organizations must decentralize decisionmaking, thereby granting autonomy with accountability to sub-units, in order to function effectively. Decisions made at the top of a large bureaucracy will suffer from the absence of detailed information about local conditions at each site, will be slow to cope with any unusual situations, and will tend to enforce standardized procedures on every situation, no matter how poorly those procedures may fit the situation.

Decentralization has been a popular theme in school districts for a long time. Indeed, most districts claim that they are decentralized, having latched onto the "site-based management" movement of the 1980s. Superintendents and central-office personnel point to their local school councils, staffed by parents, teachers, and school administrators, and claim that they have moved decisionmaking down to the school level. However, they have neither achieved nor even attempted *true* decentralization, which requires that power over the budget be given to each school—and taken away from the central office. It's the golden rule of power: whoever has the gold makes the rules. No one has made this point more clearly than New York University scholar Diane Ravitch. Her 1974 book *The Great School Wars* describes how New York City has played educational three-card monte over its long public school history by moving *apparent* control over decisions up and down the system, between the central chancellor's office and the local superintendents, but never yielding any fraction of control to the schools.

Most school districts claim that they are decentralized, having latched onto the "site-based management" movement of the 1980s. However, they have neither achieved nor even attempted true decentralization.

While Los Angeles too claims to be decentralized, the principal of one of the inner city's most successful schools says angrily, "There is no belief system in the district now that schools can make decisions for themselves—and it's only gotten worse." Another principal said, "We really don't make budgets here. The mother district really tells us how many to hire of which kind, pays them, takes care of all that."

In *Making Schools Work*, Lydia Segal and I detail the results of an empirical study of nine school systems that vary dramatically in their degree of decentralization. In addition to New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago, our study included the school systems in Houston, Edmonton, and Seattle, each of which is relatively decentralized, as well as the three largest Catholic school systems in the United States—Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles—which are more like loose federations of schools than "systems." The findings from our study demonstrate that true decentralization yields benefits in both efficiency and performance.

Defining Decentralization

Why is budgetary control so crucial to decentralization? Consider the management steps that principals must follow if they are to take charge of their schools. They must:

- Identify the educational needs of each student in the school.
- Determine the teaching, counseling, and other staff resources that will be necessary to meet each student's needs.
- Build a staffing plan that combines the full-time, part-time, outsourced, credentialed, and noncredentialed personnel necessary to provide those services to students.
- Design a school schedule that enables the principal to use staff creatively, in a way that frees up enough money to acquire all of the part-time and outsourced resources deemed necessary to meet the students' needs. For example, a school might decide to have some classes with 40 students in them, meeting for two hours every third day. This might enable the school to teach reading in small groups of five students each.

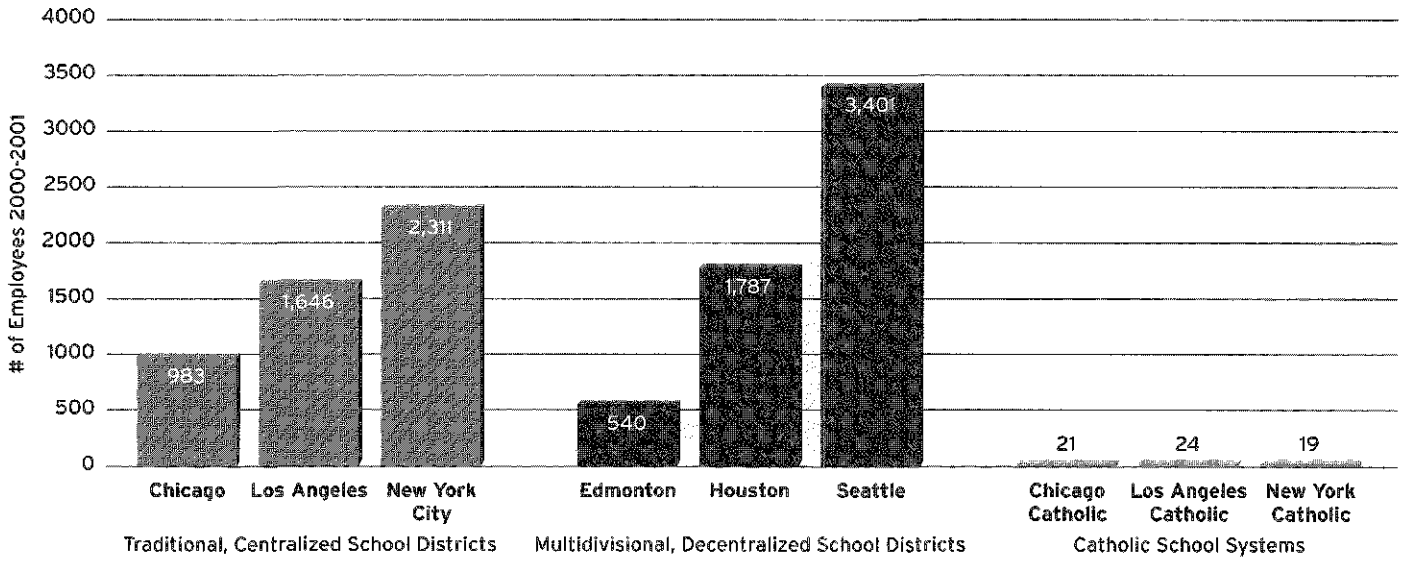
No two schools have the same student populations. Thus no two schools should have identical staffing or schedules. No central-office administrator can perform this kind of detailed planning at the school level. As a result, each principal must have budgetary control in order to create the proper conditions for teaching and learning.

Our study classified the nine school systems into three organizational types, based on the taxonomy created by Oliver Williamson in his 1975 book *Markets and Hierarchies*. "Unitary" districts like New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago are the traditional kind of organization. In these, most important decisions

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Central-Office Efficiency (Figure 1)

School systems that decentralize power to individual schools are able to carry smaller central-office staffs, thus driving more resources to the school level. The most decentralized systems, Catholic archdioceses, maintain only about 20 central-office employees for every 100,000 students. Seattle, which has never recovered from a serious loss of students in the wake of a forced busing program, is an outlier among the decentralized systems. Houston did not begin its decentralization plan in earnest until 2001.



SOURCE: Author

are made at the central office. Schools are allocated a formulaic number of regular, special-education, physical-education, and other teachers, and they are not free to change their staffing except through an onerous process of waivers. Decisions on professional development, curriculum, and materials are made at the central office, which also controls the budgets for building maintenance, utilities, and other necessities.

In "multidivisional" districts such as Seattle, Edmonton, and Houston, the principal receives an allocation of funds and then is free to decide how best to spend that money on staff, materials, computers, school maintenance, utilities, and so on, much as the managers of corporate divisions are given wide-ranging authority and are held accountable for the bottom line. In a real sense, the principal is the CEO, having the power to decide virtually all matters except teachers' pay, which is set by union contract. The possibility that a principal might become capricious can be held in check through the use of annual surveys of all school employees, students, and parents, who are questioned regarding their view of the principal's leadership along with other elements of school performance.

The Catholic archdiocesan schools may be characterized as "holding companies." In these systems, the central office has very limited power over the principals. Each school is on its own to meet its budgetary needs or to go out of business. One result is that the central-office staff in holding-company districts is very small. The central office for New York City's archdiocesan schools, for instance, has a staff of only 22 people, including secretaries, to serve a system with 115,000 students.

These systems vary greatly in the degree of budgetary control possessed by individual school principals. We interviewed at least 5 percent of the principals in each system (but no fewer than ten principals in each system), 223 principals in all, and went through their school budgets with them. We calculated how much of the money was under the control of the principal and how much the central office. These calculations showed that principals controlled 6 percent of their budgets in New York City, a traditional "unitary" district, contrasted with 92 percent in Edmonton, one of the decentralized "multidivisional" districts. That all three of the multidivisional school districts have greater decentralization of budgets than even New York City's archdiocesan schools is remarkable. In the traditional districts, most principals had no idea how much money was in their school's budget. One Los Angeles principal estimated that her budget was $50 million when, in fact, it was about $20 million. The budget appears to be on a need-to-know basis: principals don't need to know their budgets, because they don't control how the funds are spent.

The decentralized school districts are quite different in size, location, and degree of unionization. Edmonton has less than half the enrollment of Houston's school district, Seattle less than a quarter. Edmonton and Seattle also have very strong unions, while Houston's unions are prohibited by state law from engaging in collective bargaining. Despite these differences, all three have suc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cessfully implemented a radical form of budgetary decentralization known as "weighted student formula."

Innovation from the North

Weighted-student-formula budgeting was invented through trial and error by Edmonton superintendent Mike Strembitsky, beginning in 1973. The system attaches funds to individual students, rather than to schools or school districts, and then allows students to choose any public school in the district, with neighborhood students' having preference at each school. Strembitsky implemented this system in the course of his 20-plus years as superintendent, thus giving the system time to become fully embedded in the structure, management practices, and politics of Edmonton.

When John Stanford, a retired army general, became superintendent of the Seattle schools in 1995, he traveled to Edmonton with his chief financial officer, Joseph Olchefske. (Olchefske later took over as superintendent when Stanford passed away and recently announced his intention to resign in the wake of a surprise budgetary shortfall.) They brought Strembitsky's budgeting system to Seattle and implemented it the next year. In the Seattle system, a "basic student," assigned a weight of 1.0, is a native English speaker with no special needs or economic disadvantage. Such students receive an annual allocation of $2,600 that can be taken to any public school in the district. The maximum allocation of $24,067, associated with a weight of 9.2, applies to a non-English-speaking student who has multiple, severe learning disabilities and comes from a low-income home. Each school also receives a "foundation grant," which amounts to approximately $195,000 a year for an elementary school and up to $529,000 for a senior high school.

Rod Paige, then Houston's schools superintendent, had also heard about Edmonton, and he too made the pilgrimage to meet with Strembitsky. Paige, now the Bush administration's secretary of education, implemented weighted-student-formula budgeting in Houston during the 2001–02 school year. The district had already taken several steps under Paige to achieve decentralization, but it was the strapping of funds to individual students that hardwired the change into the Houston system.

The pairing of student-based funding with school choice seems crucial to making decentralization work. On the one hand, decentralizing power to principals will not improve student achievement unless poorly performing schools begin to lose students and their funding. On the other hand, school choice without student-based funding or some equally effective method of decentralizing school funds will also be ineffective. Giving parents a choice but not giving principals the autonomy necessary to improve their schools would elicit only frustration and pain on all sides. In a sense, by establishing public school choice, all three of the decentralized school districts have found a way to approximate the proven power of competition in a governmental setting. If a school cannot attract enough students to remain

Giving parents a choice but not giving principals the autonomy necessary to improve their schools would elicit only frustration and pain on all sides.

viable in these systems, it is reduced to a *program* rather than a school. The principal is then removed and replaced by a *program director* who reports to another, successful principal. In every case, it is apparent when a school performs poorly, because families will abandon it and it will stand empty.

University of Washington scholar Paul Hill rightly criticizes the current use of weighted-student-formula budgeting for ignoring the reality that staff salaries are the largest budget item in any school. In Houston, Edmonton, and Seattle, the school district pays teachers' salaries and then charges schools based on the average salary of all teachers in the district. The result is that schools in wealthy neighborhoods, which tend to attract more experienced and therefore more expensive teachers, spend more on salaries than they actually pay for. Hill calls this a "hidden subsidy" to rich neighborhoods. The Houston district, for one, has set a timetable of ten years over which it intends to move to charging schools for actual teachers' salaries. Though student-based funding alone is no panacea, it represents a politically acceptable form of budgetary decentralization that works.

Decentralization and Efficiency

Research on businesses and government agencies consistently finds that as an organization grows, it experiences a disproportionately large increase in central-office staff. Very large organizations must adopt a different basic structure if they are to retain enough efficiency to succeed as they grow. The advantage of the decentralized structure of the multidivisional type of organization is that it can effectively mitigate that staff growth by giving managers who know the needs of their divisions the power to make decisions, thereby reducing the necessity for central-office oversight. Our results suggest that the same is true for school systems, as Figure 1 shows. Edmonton and the Catholic systems have very small central-office staffs, and Houston and Seattle, while still carrying large staffs that built up over decades, are in the process of downsizing.

Perhaps the most remarkable finding in Figure 1 is the very small central-office staffs found in the Catholic archdiocesan school systems. These results illustrate the kind of central-staff

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

efficiency that is possible under true decentralization. However, it should be noted that these districts have little capacity to offer custom-designed professional development courses for teachers and that their ability to search out new developments in curriculum is also limited. The limitation of the "holding company" structure is that it can provide little synergy or economies of scale to its largely independent schools. Oliver Williamson, in *Markets and Hierarchies*, theorized that the multidivisionary organization will outperform all other types. Time may prove him right in the case of schools, though it is possible that the loosely federated Catholic systems will continue to thrive in their present organizational form.

In the public districts, Seattle is an outlier, with a relatively large central staff. This may be the result of the dramatic decline in enrollments in Seattle after the onset of forced busing, during which enrollment dropped from nearly 100,000 in 1970 to only 39,000 in 1990. The district has yet to downsize its central staff to match that decline in enrollments. As a result, Seattle spent $9,700 per pupil in 2000–01 (excluding debt service and capital expenses). Meanwhile, Edmonton and Houston spent just $5,800 (Canadian) and $5,600, respectively, per pupil. By comparison, New York City spent $11,800 per pupil; Los Angeles, $9,600; and Chicago, $8,200.

Overall, it is clear that the decentralized systems are far more efficient in the number of central-office staff. Officials in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago might complain that the comparison is unfair because most of the people who appear on the central-office payroll actually work in schools. That is true, but keep in mind that the schools have no choice about which kinds of staff they receive from the central office. The principals we interviewed said that if they were given the money instead of the person assigned to them by the central office, they would choose to deploy those funds in other, more efficient ways.

Decentralization and Achievement

Decentralization also appears to improve student performance. Only a few of the districts could be directly compared because they use the same standardized achievement test. Houston and Los Angeles, the sixth and second largest school districts in the United States, respectively, each use the Stanford 9 test. Students in both systems are about 90 percent minority (Houston has more African-Americans, Los Angeles more Latinos), and about 80 percent come from low-income families. Both have witnessed improvements in test scores over the past few years. However, Houston's scores are significantly higher than those of Los Angeles in both reading and math, and the city has experienced greater gains in recent years. In 1997–98, Los Angeles students in grades 2–8 scored in the 24th percentile in reading on the SAT 9, while Houston scored in the 32nd percentile, a gap of 8 national percentile ranking points. By 2000–01, the gap had grown to 13 points, with Houston scoring in the 46th percentile and Los Angeles in the 33rd percentile.

Our further analysis revealed that the "race gap" has narrowed each year in Houston since decentralization began there, even before the introduction of student-based funding, while the race gap in Los Angeles widens each year. A similar 2002 analysis by the Council of the Great City Schools confirmed both the improvement in Houston and the narrowing of that city's racial achievement gap. Note, though, that comparing test results across cities is difficult even when both cities use the same test. In this case, for example, the results for Los Angeles are likely to be overstated, because in 2000–01 Los Angeles counted SAT 9 scores only for those students who had also taken the test the year before.

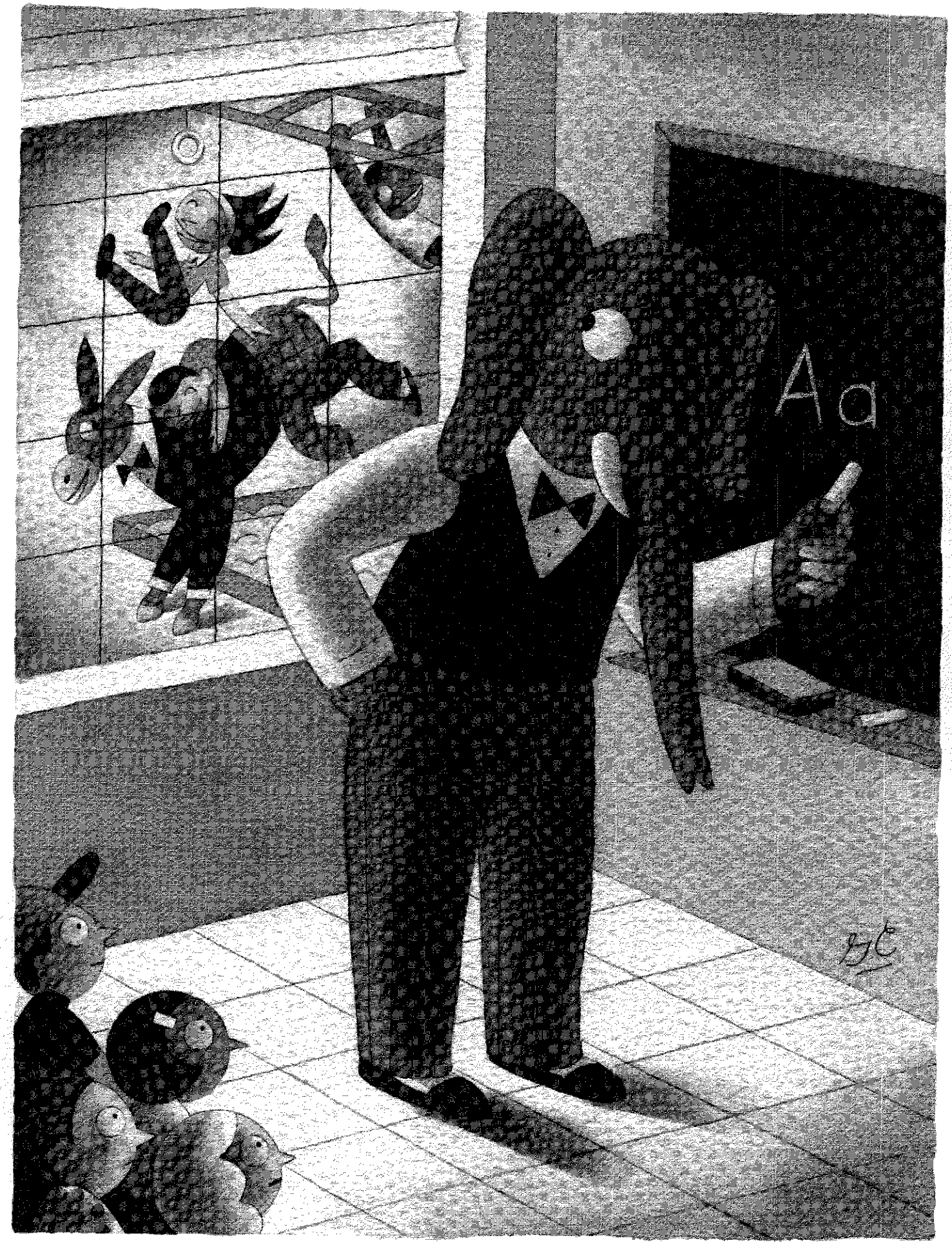
New York City public schools do not use a standardized test that can be compared with any of the other public school districts. However, a 2001 study by Raymond Domanico of the Metro New York Industrial Areas Foundation (prepared for the New York University Program on Education and Civil Society) compared the scores of New York City Catholic and public schools with similar student populations. He found that the archdiocesan students outscored their public school counterparts on standardized tests in grades 4 and 8 in both 1999 and 2000. University of Chicago scholar Anthony Bryk and his colleagues, in *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*, reported similar results from comparisons of public and Catholic schools. Of course, here too it is difficult to make comparisons because the act of choosing a private school may reflect other factors, such as a family's commitment to education, that influence student achievement.

Today's urban school districts have more than enough money in their budgets to do their jobs well. Now the challenge is to organize them so as to maximize their efficiency and performance. There is hope that change on a larger scale is coming. Joel Klein, chancellor of the New York City schools, announced in August of this year that he is implementing the "My Galaxy" computer-driven system, which will enable principals to assume control over their school budgets. This is the first step toward a full-blown implementation of weighted-student-formula budgeting in that city. Cincinnati adopted its own version of this budgeting system during the 1999–2000 school year, and other districts are considering following suit.

School districts are like other large institutions. They work well only if they are organized and managed properly. And as in other large organizations, faraway bureaucrats in central offices are in a poor position to know what should be done in each of a hundred or a thousand schools. Thus local autonomy along with accountability is essential to success in education. Decentralizing power to school principals and funding students rather than schools would be a good start.

–William G. Ouchi is a professor at UCLA's Anderson School of Management. More information on his study of school district management is available at www.williamouchi.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

President Bush proposes to refocus Head Start on the teaching of academic skills. Should Democrats go along?

Competing Visions

by RON HASKINS

PROJECT HEAD START WAS created during the heady, idealistic days of the mid-1960s. Through two seminal victories, the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the civil-rights movement had won equality in the eyes of the law, but the economic and social legacies of centuries of slavery and racial discrimination remained. President Lyndon Johnson believed that it was the nation's duty to provide not just legal equality but also equality of opportunity. In his 1965 commencement address at Howard University, he called for the "next and the more profound stage" in the civil-rights struggle. "We seek not just freedom but opportunity. . . not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result." Johnson's War on Poverty would include a host of initiatives designed to bring blacks and other disadvantaged Americans to what he called "the starting line" of American life with the skills and abilities necessary to compete on a level playing field. The War on Poverty focused on education as a tool for upward mobility, and Head Start was to become one of the cornerstones of the federal effort.

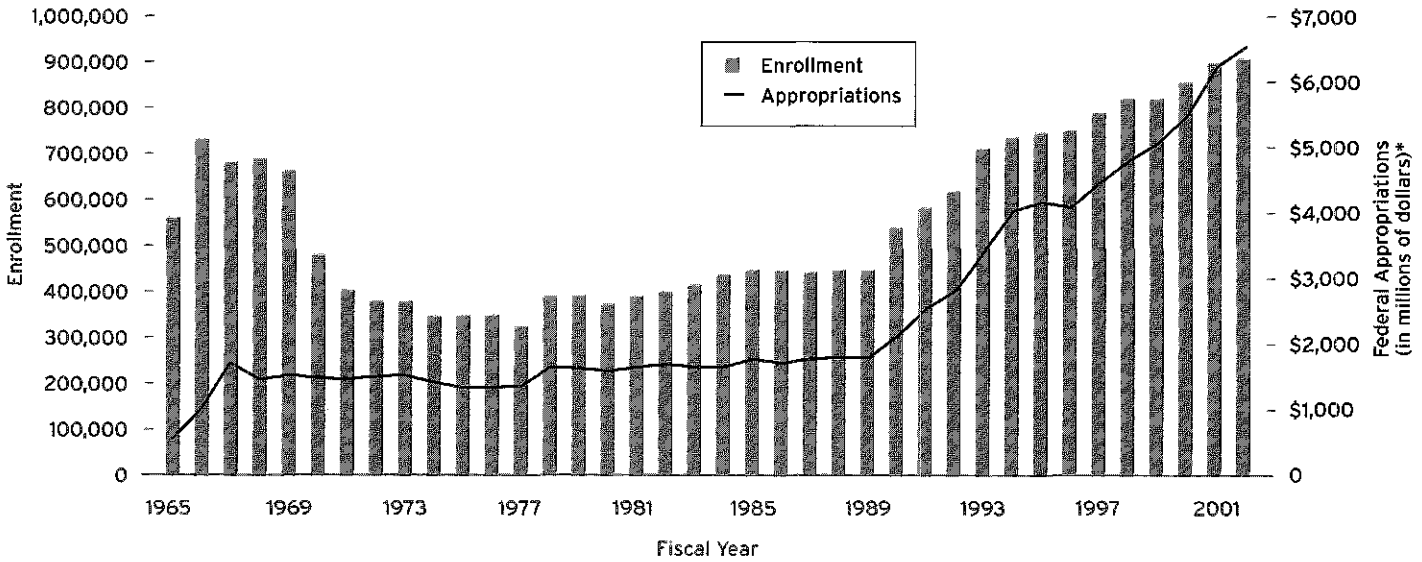
The idea for Head Start, a preschool program for disadvantaged children, emerged from the observation that, on average, poor and minority children arrive at school already behind their peers in the intellectual skills and abilities required for academic achievement. These deficits in turn lead to poor performance in school, which narrows the economic opportunities disadvantaged children encounter when they become adults. In order to counteract the corrosive influences of turbulent neighborhoods, shoddy health care, and undereducated parents, Head Start

ILLUSTRATION BY GREG CLARKE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Head Start's Ever-Expanding Budget (Figure 1)

Increases in funding for Head Start have dramatically outpaced the growth in enrollment. Real spending jumped from less than $1 billion in Head Start's first full year, 1966, to more than $6 billion in 2002.



*** In constant 2002 dollars**

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

would attempt to prepare children to flourish in school.

Nearly 40 years after its creation, Head Start has gained the favor of Democrats and Republicans alike. Its budget in 2003 was $6.7 billion, more than tripling (in real terms) since 1990 (see Figure 1 and Table 1). Real per-pupil spending increased from $1,380 in 1966 to $7,170 in 2002. However, despite Head Start's long history and ever-expanding budget, the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged, between white and minority, is still substantial, both during the preschool years and thereafter. This stubborn fact has caused many to question Head Start's strategies and direction. Housed in the Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start has in the past emphasized not just early education but also socialization and giving poor children and their families access to an array of nutritional, health, and social services.

Now the Bush administration has proposed reorienting the program to emphasize the acquisition of intellectual skills and to prepare poor kids for school. In order to achieve this objective, the administration is trying to align Head Start more closely with the public school system. After less than a year in office, President Bush implemented by administrative rule a program called "Good Start, Grow Smart," the central thrust of which is to instruct Head Start teachers across the nation in methods for improving school readiness. The program also helps local Head Start centers develop an accountability system that assesses children's learning in literacy, language, and numeracy. The administration had made an earlier proposal to move Head Start to the Department of Education, which would have signaled the program's new commitment to intellectual development. But after encountering fierce competition, in February 2003, the administration proposed an even more dramatic overhaul of Head Start. The plan is to turn control of Head Start over to the states, as long as they commit to making school readiness the program's chief priority and to meet several other requirements. Currently, federal funds flow directly

State and Federal Spending on Preschool and Child-Care Programs in 2003 (Table 1)

PROGRAM	SPENDING (in millions)
Head Start	$6,668
Title I Grants	284
Early Reading First	75
Special Education	1,339
Child-Care and Development Fund	7,064
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (welfare)	4,330
Social Services Block Grant (Title XX)	160
Child and Adult Care Food Program	1,940
TOTAL	$21,860

SOURCE: Office of Management and Budget

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to local Head Start centers, which are run primarily by community-based groups. As a result, Head Start teachers, staff, and parents, working through the National Head Start Association in Washington, have viscerally opposed the administration's proposals, fearing the dilution of Head Start's program of comprehensive services in favor of the focus on school readiness. They regard this as a repudiation of Head Start's historical mission as well as a threat to their control of the program. The Bush proposal, now before Congress, has rekindled a debate that began in 1964.

The Cooke Committee

In that year, Sargent Shriver, a holdover from the Kennedy administration who became one of the chief architects of Johnson's War on Poverty, developed the idea for Head Start from his involvement in programs for retarded children (his wife, Eunice, would later found the Special Olympics). Shriver had visited a remarkable project conducted by Dr. Susan Gray of George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville (which later merged with Vanderbilt University). Gray's project was one of the first preschool education programs in the nation to be carefully evaluated, and Shriver claimed that it demonstrated that early intervention could "change the IQ of mentally retarded children." If this were possible, Shriver thought, why couldn't high-quality preschool also improve the IQ scores of poor children who seemed destined to fail in school?

In the late fall of 1964, Shriver asked Dr. Robert Cooke, a pediatrician at Johns Hopkins and the chairman of the Kennedy Foundation's scientific advisory committee, to head a committee whose task would be to make recommendations for a preschool program that would promote the development and school readiness of disadvantaged children. Shriver was in a hurry. With President Johnson's blessing, he had decided to begin the new program the next summer.

Cooke's committee, which met several times in January and February of 1965, had a free hand in designing Head Start, which became the best known and most popular of the War on Poverty programs. Unexpectedly departing from the public statements of Johnson and Shriver, the Cooke committee recommended that Head Start avoid focusing simply on school preparation or IQ development. Instead, Head Start was to offer "comprehensive" services, including health care, mental health services, nutrition, preschool education, and parental involvement. Addressing all the child's needs was thought to have a greater impact on children's development, including their intellectual development, than education alone. Almost none of the present programs that promote children's health and welfare, such as Medicaid and the food-stamp and child-nutrition programs, existed in 1965. In that light, recommending comprehensive services was prescient of the Cooke committee.

Much of the thinking at the time was influenced by

Head Start's defenders argue that it nurtures children's development in ways other than merely trying to improve IQ scores.

J. McVicker Hunt's *Intelligence and Experience* and Benjamin Bloom's *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics*, both of which questioned the popular view that intelligence was immutable. There was an increasing faith that social programs could produce sizable gains in IQ scores. Unfortunately, the first major evaluation of Head Start, published in 1969, failed to find permanent IQ gains, thereby raising the question of whether Head Start was incapable of influencing intellectual development or was just implemented poorly. The Cooke committee's decision to make Head Start a comprehensive program enabled its defenders to fudge the issue by arguing that the major goals of the program included many activities crucial to a child's development, such as providing better nutrition and health screening, other than trying to improve

Unexpectedly departing from the public statements of Lyndon Johnson and Sargent Shriver, the Cooke committee recommended that Head Start avoid focusing simply on school preparation or IQ development.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE LBJ LIBRARY

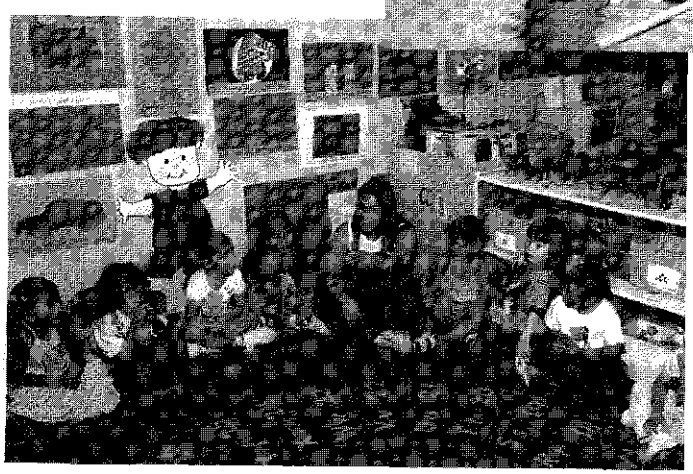
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Studies show that Head Start provides higher-quality care and education than most child-care facilities and even most state-sponsored preschool programs.

IQ scores. The fudging continues to this day.

Another important recommendation made by the Cooke committee was that Head Start funds should travel directly from the federal government to local communities, bypassing the states. This prevented racist governors in the South from killing the program and enabled Head Start to get off the ground quickly. The professionals on the Cooke committee wanted to start small and build up gradually, but Johnson and Shriver were operating on the political logic that called for mounting the biggest program possible, given the money and political will available in the spring and summer of 1965. Amazingly enough, by the early summer of 1965, just four months after the Cooke committee recommended the Head Start program to Shriver, the Johnson administration had funded programs in more than 2,500 communities that enrolled 560,000 children.

Practically overnight, the rapid outflow of funds created a large constituency for Head Start. Most congressional districts housed at least one Head Start program. Thus when trouble came—as it inevitably would—Head Start had advocates from communities across the nation who would lobby for the program. Constituent pressure on Congress has helped Head Start not merely to survive annual appropriations battles, but to flourish even in the face of mounting evidence that the program was not adequately preparing children to succeed in school.



Just four months after the Cooke committee recommended the Head Start program to Shriver, the Johnson administration had funded programs in more than 2,500 communities that enrolled 560,000 children.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Research Literature

Everyone agrees, and has since the very first studies were conducted in the 1960s, that Head Start produces an initial boost in children's test scores. However, most studies also show that these effects fade within a year or two after children enter school. By the 2nd or 3rd grade, there is no difference between the test scores of children who attended most preschool programs, including Head Start, and those who did not. This is not to say that it is impossible for preschool to elicit long-term gains. Studies of the Abecedarian program in North Carolina and the Perry Preschool program in Michigan have shown remarkable long-term improvements in academic achievement and a host of other important outcomes, including college attendance, employment, delinquency, and crime. But no Head Start programs have been shown to produce this broad range of long-term improvements. Indeed, only a few individual Head Start programs have been shown to produce any long-term gains.

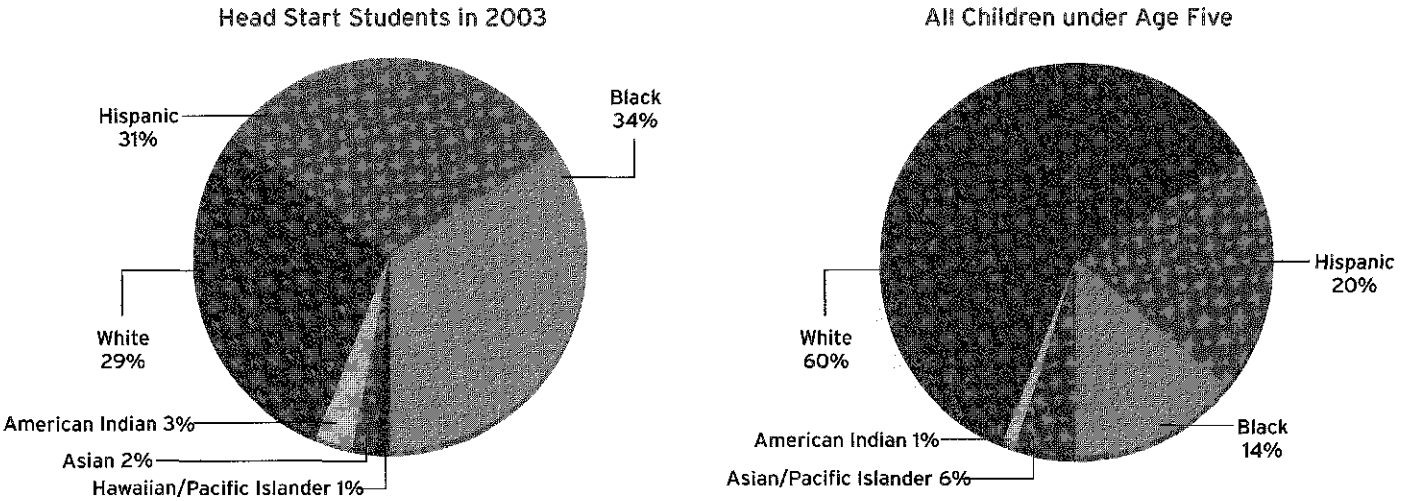
Nevertheless, many high-quality preschool programs appear to reduce placement into special education and grade retentions. Given the costs of special education—at least twice the cost of the regular program in most public school systems—and the costs of grade retention, it is easy to conclude that the high-quality preschool programs that produce these long-term effects may well pay for themselves. However, there is little evidence that Head Start programs as a whole are of high enough quality to make a difference in either of these respects.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to make definitive statements about the effects of Head Start because of the shortage of reliable research. A 1997 study by the General Accounting Office

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Head Start's Student Body (Figure 2)

Black and Hispanic children are over-represented in Head Start classrooms compared with the entire population of children under five.



Note: Black, white, American Indian, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander percentages exclude individuals who are also ethnically Hispanic.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Note: Estimated population on July 1, 2003. Black, white, American Indian, and Asian/Pacific Islander percentages exclude individuals who are also ethnically Hispanic.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau

(GAO) screened more than 200 empirical studies of Head Start and found only 22 that met their criteria for worthwhile research. Even these 22 studies had flaws that "weakened confidence in the findings." Furthermore, there was not even one study that included a national sample of Head Start programs. The GAO concluded that "the number of impact studies was insufficient to allow us to draw conclusions about the impact of the national Head Start program."

The strongest evidence that Head Start elicits lasting effects comes from studies published in 1995 and 2000 by Janet Currie and her colleagues at UCLA. Using data from surveys of representative samples of families that included information on whether children had or had not participated in Head Start, Currie found that white children who attended Head Start centers were less often held back in school than siblings who did not participate in Head Start. They also had higher test scores, which persisted into adolescence, and higher high-school graduation rates. However, none of these effects were found among black children, a third of those served (see Figure 2) although one of the surveys suggested that black children who attended Head Start engage in less criminal activity. Black children exhibited the familiar effect of an initial boost in test scores that faded away, leading the researchers to attribute the lack of sustained gains to the abysmal public schools in disadvantaged black neighborhoods.

On balance, the research evidence on Head Start is both mixed and uncertain, inasmuch as the quality of the research literature on Head Start is deficient. During the 1998 reauthorization of Head Start, Congress, recognizing the dearth of good research, ordered the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct a scientific study of a national sample of Head Start centers. The first results from this study will be available in 2004. In the meantime, the achievement gap persists, despite all the claims of success for Head Start.

A New Mission

Data on school readiness for children entering Head Start in 1997 and 2001 show that children start the program with test scores far below average. Their performance improves slightly after a year in Head Start, but not enough to make a real difference in the achievement gap (see Figure 3). These striking differences upon the completion of Head Start translate into equally stark differences in school-age test scores, high-school graduation rates, college attendance, and earnings in the workforce.

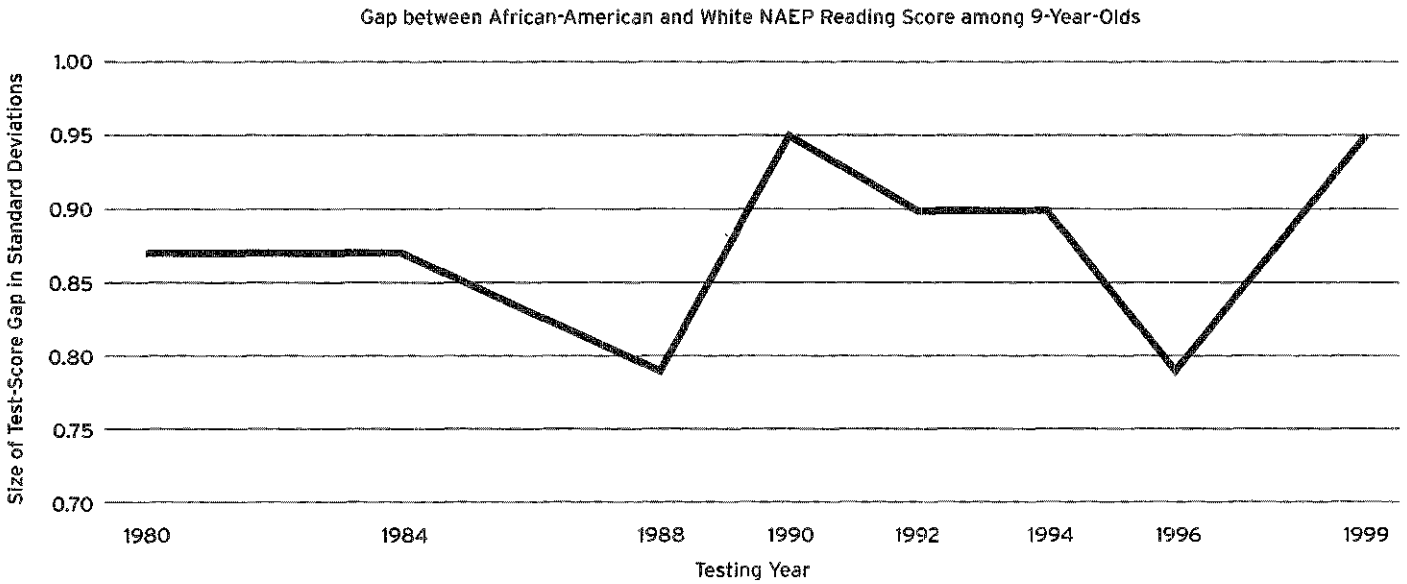
These sobering facts convinced the Bush administration that Head Start needed to be retooled to focus on getting children ready to learn. The plan began with the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative, whose purpose was to retrain Head Start teachers and to bring accountability to the program. In effect, Bush is overruling the Cooke committee by making school readiness—an easily measurable outcome—the single most important goal of Head Start.

The shift in emphasis from comprehensive services to intel-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Persistence of the Achievement Gap (Figure 3)

Critics highlight the continued underperformance of African-American children as evidence of Head Start's failure to give students the academic head start they need. The gap between the reading scores of African-American and white nine-year-olds on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was larger in 1999 than it had been in 1980.



SOURCE: Paul Hill, Kacey Guin, and Mary-Beth Celio in "Minority Children at Risk," *Our Schools and Our Future ... Are We Still at Risk?* Paul E. Peterson, ed. (Hoover Institution, 2003)

lectual development has provoked strong opposition from Head Start's stakeholders. The National Head Start Association was so opposed to the teacher-training and curricular aspects of the Good Start, Grow Smart initiative that the chairman of the association's board, Ron Herndon, took the remarkable step of sending a letter to all Head Start programs, asking them to boycott the national teacher-training session the administration had planned for November 2002. The association's board believes, Herndon wrote, that "local parents, staff and governing boards, and not the federal government, are in the best position to determine how to improve the operation of their program." Even so, more than 2,000 Head Start teachers and administrators attended the training session.

The president's budget for 2004 contained an even more inflammatory proposal: to turn Head Start over to the states. This would overturn the Cooke committee's other crucial recommendation, that there be no middleman between the federal government and local Head Start programs. In return, states must promote school readiness in a more focused and sustained manner than Head Start programs have been willing to do. States must also meet several other conditions, including: 1) working with the public schools to define the academic and social skills that five-year-olds must possess in order to succeed in kindergarten; 2) developing preschool activities and materials that help poor children acquire these skills; 3) outlining an accountability program for determining whether four-year-olds are learning these skills; 4) maintaining state spending on preschool programs; and 5) continuing to provide comprehensive services.

The reasoning behind the Bush administration's devolution proposal is twofold. First, as Table 1 shows (page 28), several streams of federal and state funding support preschool education and child care. All of these streams, except Head Start, are controlled to some degree by the states. It makes little sense, says the Bush administration, to have state governments in charge of most funds for preschool, but to bypass them with regard to the single biggest preschool program. The administration argues that the states should be able to align all of the funds available for preschool and child care in the service of a coherent statewide plan for improving the education of disadvantaged children.

The second reason is that Head Start programs have been unwilling to accept responsibility for closing the achievement gap. The devolution proposal requires states to do so. Moreover, the federal No Child Left Behind Act, enacted in 2001, gives states new incentives to improve preschool instruction. As demonstrated by four decades of research, it is exceptionally difficult for schools to erase the deficits poor and minority children have accumulated by the time they start school at age five. Thus many researchers, educators, and policymakers now believe that high-quality preschool is a prerequisite for improving the achievement of disadvantaged students. Given the opportunity to control Head Start funds and the flexibility to combine all the funds available for early education, states should be highly motivated to build comprehensive preschool programs for poor children.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nonetheless, the administration's agenda faces strong opposition from both congressional Democrats and the Head Start community. Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut told the *New York Journal News* that the president's proposal would "absolutely destroy this program." At a Brookings Institution forum in May, California representative George Miller likened turning Head Start over to the states to "handing your children over to Michael Jackson." Many of the nation's leading newspapers have also adopted forceful editorial stances against devolution. In general, the opposition to Bush's proposal to give states increased responsibility for Head Start hinges on three arguments: 1) Head Start, as constituted, is an immensely successful program that should not be toyed with; 2) there is little evidence that states can do a better job than Head Start programs of improving children's school readiness; and 3) states, especially in the current budget environment, may try to reduce spending on Head Start in order to use the money for other purposes.

The National Head Start Association has maintained its exceptionally critical position regarding the president's proposal. When the president unveiled the devolution plan in February 2003, the association's president and CEO, Sarah Greene, called the proposal a "potential disaster." Writing in *USA Today*, Greene claimed that the administration's real goal was "not to help Head Start children but rather to dismantle Head Start." When Bush visited a Maryland Head Start center in July 2003 to explain and defend his agenda, the association unleashed a barrage of criticism. Asked if she had attended the president's visit, Greene said that she didn't "have time for floor shows."

The association's national office sent Head Start directors a letter with detailed instructions about how to lobby against the Bush proposal. Parents were encouraged to seek help in their lobbying from Head Start staff members. The Bush administration, concerned that Head Start programs were using federal resources, including paid staff, to support lobbying, sent Head Start programs a letter of caution, signed by Windy Hill, the national director of Head Start. The letter warned local programs that they would be subject to penalties if they used government resources to lobby Congress. The National Head Start Association responded by bringing suit against the administration in federal court for threatening local programs and trying to create a "chilling effect" on actions that parents and Head Start staff might take to save Head Start. The suit was subsequently withdrawn, but the tensions between Head Start's supporters and the Bush administration remain.

Meanwhile, the administration negotiated a compromise with House Republicans. The administration agreed to scale back its broad devolution plans in favor of a pilot project. Up to eight states would be authorized to conduct demonstration programs testing whether state control of Head Start actually leads to better coordination of preschool programs, greater emphasis on school readiness, improvement in poor children's preschool test scores, and progress in closing the achievement gap between poor and advantaged students. At this writing, the compromise legislation has passed the House by merely one vote and appears headed for an equally rocky reception in the Senate.

For too long, Head Start has been merrily rolling along, enjoying ever more generous increases in funding, without demonstrating its value.

In several respects, the House's compromise legislation is an improvement over the administration's plan to allow every state to assume control over Head Start. As the administration recognizes, Head Start is a good program with a decent track record. Studies show that Head Start provides higher-quality care and education than most child-care facilities and even most state-sponsored preschool programs. Moreover, if we ignore the inflated rhetoric being used by those defending Head Start, their major arguments against the administration proposal are reasonable. So rather than abandon a modestly successful program in our attempt to promote equality of education, the best policy would be to let a few states have more control of Head Start funds, carefully study their subsequent reforms, and then determine future policy based on solid evidence.

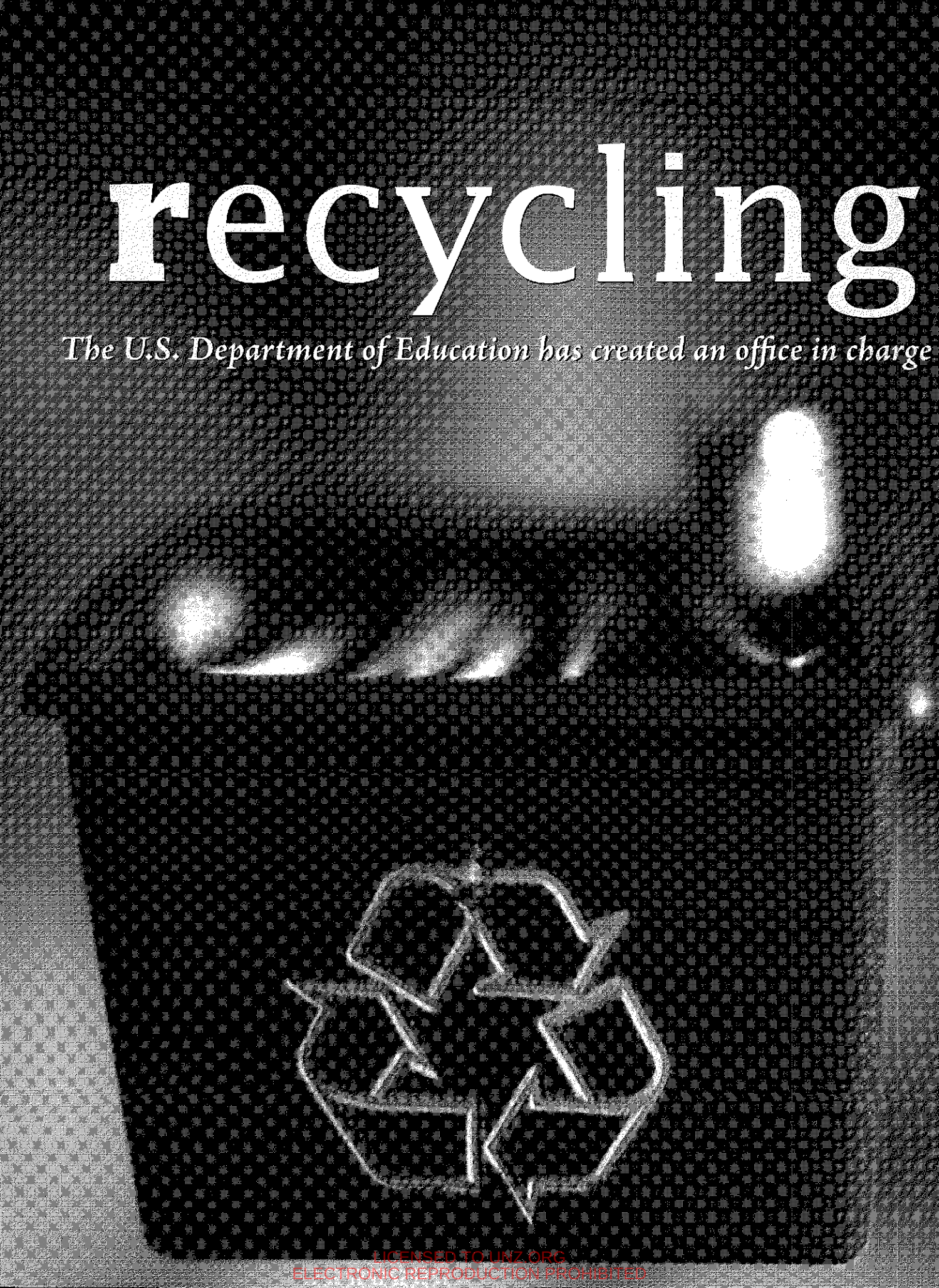
Whatever the outcome, the Bush administration should be commended for taking on a politically difficult issue and sticking to its agenda, despite Head Start's overwhelming popularity. For too long, Head Start has been merrily rolling along, enjoying ever more generous increases in funding, without demonstrating its value. Its stakeholders may take comfort in turn by spreading false claims of success or in excusing its ineffectiveness by lowering expectations. After all, they argue, no one should expect a single year of preschool to overcome the difficulties of being raised in a troubled family or neighborhood. True, perhaps. But these claims provide little comfort to the disadvantaged children who find themselves behind from the second the starter's gun goes off. The greatest challenge may come when even the overhaul of Head Start fails to change things much, as I expect it may. Will we then be willing to pay for preschool teachers with college degrees, who will replace the parents and poorly paid staff who presently work in Head Start centers? For two years of preschool education? Three years? There is every reason to doubt that the nation's policymakers are ready to take the politically difficult and potentially expensive steps that will be necessary to achieve Johnson's vision of equality of education as a fact and a result.

–Ron Haskins is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recycling

The U.S. Department of Education has created an office in charge



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reforms

funding innovation. Can we avoid the mistakes of the past?

In November 2002, with President Bush's signing of the Education Sciences Reform Act, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, or OERI, was dissolved. Out of the reorganization arose two new offices within the department, the Institute of Education Sciences and the Office of Innovation and Improvement, signaling the Bush administration's commitment to both scientifically based research and continuous innovation within education. What no one really bothered to ask was whether the nation's schools need more innovation and, if so, is the federal government proficient at nurturing it?

In this regard, my experiences as assistant secretary of OERI in the early 1990s seem instructive. OERI had a varied portfolio of programs, including some that supported experimentation in the schools. We were always on the lookout for the latest thing, the newest innovation that would set the world of education on fire. Yet, in retrospect, it is hard to think of a single program that the department funded during that time that actually made a lasting contribution to the advancement of education.

Because OERI administered a pot of discretionary funds for the department, we were often burdened with earmarks—that is, an appropriation set aside by Congress, usually at the behest of influential legislators, for specific school districts or institutions in their home states or congressional districts. Or, in more familiar terms, old-fashioned pork barreling. I vividly remember getting an urgent telephone call from the Department of Education's office of legislative affairs letting me know that a ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee had added a $1 million earmark to create a Center for Education Innovation at his state university. I thought it was a terrible idea, and so did the secretary of education and his deputy. There was absolutely no evidence that the people involved had any qualifications to run such a center, yet the earmark survived. I doubt that anything was ever again heard from this center on innovation.

One hopes that this new age of scientifically based research will enable the Department of Education to construct reviews of grant proposals based on well-established canons of science or social science as a safeguard against political demands by powerful legislators on behalf of their pork-hungry constituents. And yet, the last time I saw an analysis of the education budget, it seemed that the number of earmarks had grown, not diminished, over the past decade. So beware: earmarks are a keen way of evading peer reviews and making it unnecessary for a proposal to demonstrate its prospective value or validity.

OERI was responsible for a network of federal research labs and centers (there are ten federal R&D labs scattered across the country) where innovation was a watchword but where federal money went disproportionately for administration and dissemination rather than fresh ideas that made a mark. The labs, in particular, were supposed to disseminate innovative ideas, but I can't think of any influential innovation in education that came from them, unless it was expertise in lobbying for permanent federal funding.

Among my fondest memories of innovations was a grant awarded by the Women's Educational Equity Program. This program had been enacted in the early 1970s

by DIANE RAVITCH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CORBIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to design gender-fair materials and textbooks—and continued to exist long after every commercial publisher had adopted strict rules of gender fairness. The basic idea in the grant proposal was that teachers had to overcome their squeamishness in talking about sex; indeed, they needed to learn how to stand in front of the classroom and describe intimate body parts using their students' vernacular, rather than the technical terms found in biology textbooks. I can't recall why this innovative approach was supposed to advance gender equity, but it did get funded.

The most prominent effort to promote innovation during my brief stint in the Department of Education was the creation of the New American Schools Development Corporation, now known as New American Schools (see Jeffrey Mirel, "Unrequited Promise," in the Summer 2002 issue of *Education Next*, telling how New American Schools grew from a feisty start-up to a consummate Washington insider). This project was supposed to jump-start a new generation of American schools. Millions of dollars in private funding were raised to underwrite a search for "break-the-mold" ideas about education. New American Schools eventually funded about a dozen proposals. Most consisted of alliances among well-known school reformers, none of whom was lacking for funding or for a platform. To my knowledge, few of these proposals have had a lasting impact on American education or created a model that was widely adopted.

The Dust Heap of History

Many failed and forgotten innovations continue to live in schools where they were introduced with great fanfare and subsequently forgotten. I have often heard it said that some schools are like archeological sites; digging would reveal layer after layer of fossilized school reforms and obsolete programs. I have visited schools where the principal pointed proudly to the long list of programs in the building, as if their sheer number were evidence of real reform activity, whether they bore any relation to one another or had any demonstrated value.

Education in America tends to be like religion, with cycles of stability and change and occasional bouts of zealotry and apostasy.

Education in America tends to be like religion, with cycles of stability and change, periodic crusades, and occasional bouts of zealotry and apostasy. Any student of 19th-century American history learns about the Great Awakenings, the eras when evangelists brought revival movements to the cities and the hinterlands, and thousands of Americans found a new faith. A region of upstate New York came to be known as the "burned-over district" because so many movements, cults, evangelists, and enthusiasts had worked the area or emerged from it.

Something similar happens periodically in American education. Just when classroom methods and protocols seem to have grown stale, or when society is experiencing an unusual degree of upheaval, along comes an education movement to cast out the old and mobilize true believers. Each movement has its prophets, its sacred texts, its peculiar solutions to knotty problems. Each movement claims to have discovered the Royal Road to Learning or the policy innovation that will cure all the schools' ills at no extra cost.

In *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* (2000), I chronicled the rise and fall of one education movement after another during the 20th century. At one point, I decided to go back and count the movements. I wasn't sure that my count was accurate, but I did identify at least 20 distinct education movements, each with leaders and followers, slogans and mantras. Each claimed to be the latest, the best, the most innovative, and the final word in the reform of education. As each period of innovation waned, it was usually replaced by a movement called "back to basics" or "essentialism"—or something else that suggested a backlash against failed fads.

Each of these innovations, in turn, was seen by its adherents as the pinnacle of pedagogical science. Reformers have always called on science to validate their innovations, because they, like the American public, believe that science brings progress. In retrospect, however, the frequent appeals to science and social science over the past century were usually not much more than rhetorical gambits meant to persuade the public and to disable the opposition. Since education has had a very meager research basis, almost anything could be touted as scientific, and the public had no means of evaluating whose claims were stronger.

Unintelligent Testing

In the years immediately following World War I, school reformers eagerly embraced the promise of pedagogical science. In schools of education across the nation, psychology became the dominant department. Psychologists at Teachers College, Stanford, Harvard, Chicago, and elsewhere believed that their scientific methods made it possible to identify what should be studied and which program was right for which children. Meanwhile, sociologists believed that their scientific studies would show the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

best way to organize and administer schools. These experts insisted that science would settle the debates of the past.

This trend lent intellectual heft to an earlier movement, the vocational education movement of the 20th century's first decades. Prominent reformers, state officials, social workers—even President Theodore Roosevelt—declared that it was wasteful to expect all students to study history, literature, and foreign languages. Such an education, they insisted, was not socially efficient. Relying on current tenets of social science, they advocated steering a majority of students into vocational and industrial education. Reformers thus embraced the junior high school movement, knowing that the purpose of these institutions was to encourage students to make vocational choices as early as age 12 or 13. At the time, any educator who was modern, progressive, and scientific, or so it seemed, supported vocational and industrial education and the spread of junior high schools.

This type of tracking of students was bolstered by the single most important innovation in educational science during that era: intelligence testing. The majority of educational psychologists joined the movement to develop intelligence tests. They thought that tests and scales would allow them to peer into the human mind, assess its capacities, and catalog people according to their potential for future learning.

Psychologists like Edward Thorndike of Teachers College, Robert Yerkes of Harvard, and Carl Brigham of Princeton insisted that educational science was ushering in a new millennium of social progress and that IQ scores would enable educators to plan each child's education and future with certainty. Educators in public and private schools became persuaded that IQ tests revealed the child's "natural mental ability" and "inborn capacity" for learning. Using records from the Army's IQ testing of soldiers during World War I, Brigham ranked ethnic groups by their intelligence, with a fairly high degree of specificity. The psychologists knew that what they found caused discomfort and challenged old-fashioned ideas about democracy, but scientists—they said—could not be held responsible for their findings. Given their analysis, the job of the schools was to sort children into the right program, not to raise them up to higher levels of thinking and learning.

We now know that much of what the IQ testers measured was not innate intelligence, but children's access to educational and cultural opportunities. We now know that the tests reflected not native intelligence but years of residence in the United States and years of education, among other things. Today's psychologists look on the high-water mark of IQ testing in the 1920s with embarrassment. Yet at the time the IQ testers represented the apex of modern scientific thinking. They were the leading edge of innovation and science. And their prescriptions were disastrously wrong for American education.

The study of reading methods provides another cautionary tale of faddish innovations dressed up with claims of scientific backing. The history of reading instruction reveals many attempts in the 19th century to simplify it, to make it easier for children. Teachers were familiar with the alphabetic method, in which learning to read was synonymous with learning the letters of the alphabet; the word method, in which children learned short whole words (as in the Dick and Jane readers); and the phonetic method, in which children learned to read by sounding out the letters and combinations of letters that form words. Many contemporary accounts of schools in the late 19th century describe teachers who combined these methods, especially the word method and the phonetic method. It never occurred to them that there was supposed to be a war between disciples of the phonics approach to reading instruction and supporters of whole language, who promoted learning to read by focusing on good literature and comprehension but neglected phonetics.

When whole language first became popular, its proponents called it "psycholinguistics" in order to suggest that their approach had a scientific basis.

In the 1920s researchers began analyzing how rapidly students were able to read based on their eye movements. Researchers discovered, to no surprise, that students read faster when they read silently. They then declared that reading out loud was harmful for children because it slowed down the pace of their reading. Experts of the day warned parents not to read to their children because it would train them to get information through their ears instead of their eyes. These same researchers decided that children should learn by encountering whole words, not words and phrases parsed into phonemes. Teachers and parents were given what today we would recognize as an overdose of bad advice by researchers who thought that their scientific methods would put an end to pedagogical debates. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when whole language first became popular, its proponents called it "psycholinguistics" in order to suggest that their favored approach had an unassailably scientific basis.

The Art of Education

My favorite educator, William Chandler Bagley of Teachers

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO LINZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

College, entered the field of educational psychology in the late 19th century with the hope and expectation that one day there would be a genuine science of education. Over time he concluded that this was a false hope, that education included too many unmeasurable dimensions to compare it with the biological or physical sciences. Over the years, he made himself a pest to his fellow psychologists. Whenever they became invested in a grand idea, he punctured their pretensions with close analysis of their data and arguments. Most misguided enthusiasms, Bagley recognized, stemmed not from foolishness or fraudulent motives, but from a failure to recognize the uncertainties of fact and theory associated with schooling. Education as a field, he pointed out, had a slender inventory of well-established principles. As one drew closer to psychologists, he said, the "clash of arms and the shoutings of the rival schools" grew louder, because the competing viewpoints did not even agree on basic facts and principles.

In one of his memorable essays, "Teaching as a Fine Art," published in 1930, Bagley argued that instruction was unlikely ever to become an applied science. Teaching was not, he said, a kind of technology that could be reproduced in exacting ways. He maintained that the closest analogy to teaching would be found in the fine arts, such as music, painting, sculpture, literature, and drama. Each of these arts requires knowledge, skill, and mastery of one's materials; to succeed is difficult, not easy. It was the misguided advocates of a science of pedagogy, he said, who had insisted on separating methods of teaching from mastery of subject matter; it was they who taught courses in education theory detached from the learning of academic content. Teacher artists, by contrast, understood that they must simultaneously master pedagogical methods and the subjects they will teach.

Bagley sharpened his argument by offering the following contrast:

> *If I were seriously ill and in desperate need of a physician, and if by some miracle I could secure either Hippocrates, the father of medicine, or a young doctor fresh from the Johns Hopkins school of medicine, with his equipment comprising the latest developments in the technologies and techniques of medicine, I should, of course, take the young doctor. On the other hand, if I were commissioned to find a teacher for a group of adolescent boys and if, by some miracle, I could secure either Socrates or the latest Ph.D. from Teachers College, with his equipment of the latest technologies and techniques of teaching, with all due respect to the college that employs me and to my students, I am fairly certain that I would jump at the chance to get Socrates.*

What did Bagley mean? Just that he had a great deal of faith in the innovations of medical science, but virtually none at all in the latest techniques put forward by educational experts.

Recycled Innovations

How far have we advanced since Bagley's era? Do we now have a well-established set of principles and theories in education? Is "scientifically based research" broadly accepted by professors of education and the research community? Surely we now know far more than the psychologists of Bagley's day, yet rival schools of thought continue to disagree about theory, policy, and practice. Some ideas in education now carry greater consensus than others—one thinks of reading, where the conclusions of a wide spectrum of researchers have converged in recent years (yet, even here, loud dissenters remain). Research on education policy may even have yielded some well-grounded ideas, yet I doubt anyone is prepared to say that economic or political analysis has given us an uncontested, scientific basis

Some schools are like archeological sites. Digging would reveal layer after layer of fossilized school reforms and obsolete programs.

for policymaking. Certainly our policymakers are not willing to concede the point, not at the federal, state, or local levels, where arguments continue to rage over assessments, charter schools, vouchers, class-size reduction, and many other strategies for school reform.

So does education really need more innovation? The answer seems obvious. Of course it does. Any field of endeavor that rejects innovation will wither intellectually. Any field that is impervious to change and evolution becomes inert. Innovation is a necessity, not only because it creates possibilities for improvement, but because experimentation attracts alert and inquisitive minds. Only those who have achieved perfection can afford to reject the value of innovation.

Necessary as it is, innovation has its pitfalls.

For one thing, many proposals that claim to be innovative are merely a revival of some failed idea from the past. If one is in the business of funding novelties, it is important to know the history of education reform in order to avoid funding anew that which was deemed "innovative" a century ago. I recently received a call from an experienced journalist in Boston asking whether I had heard about an exciting new program where the students had no curriculum, no tests, and no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

textbooks, and they learned everything through personal experience. I had to smile, not because of her enthusiasm, but because I had indeed heard of similar programs—at Marietta Pierce Johnson's Organic School in Fairhope, Alabama, founded in 1907; at Junius Merriam's laboratory school at the University of Missouri, which opened its doors in 1905; and at the famous Summerhill School in England, started in 1901 and introduced to the American public during the 1960s in a best-selling book.

Friendly Advice

When I first heard that the Department of Education had created an Office of Innovation and Improvement, I was less than enthusiastic. It is not because I oppose innovation, but because I have strong doubts about whether the federal government has the capacity to nurture effective practices. My impression, based on the past 30 years, is that the federal government is likely to be hoodwinked, to be taken in by fads, to fund the status quo with a new name, or to impose a heavy regulatory burden on those who seek its largesse.

Most genuine innovators in education are likely to be too busy running their schools to seek federal funding. Most will be wary of the strings that come with the federal purse and fearful of being strangled by red tape and paperwork. Some of those who seek federal funding for their new ideas will be entrepreneurs with a scheme—not necessarily an illegal or altogether badly motivated scheme, but one fashioned in such a way as to get federal funding, regardless of its proven value or potential.

There are surely ways that the federal government can help support innovation, but only if those who are in charge are especially cautious and exceedingly humble. One of the office's most important tasks is to establish the criteria by which it judges contenders for federal largesse. For those who have assumed this role, here are a few things to think about:

- Bear in mind that most educators in the trenches do not know that you exist. Those who know about your requests for proposals are those who have a lobbyist who reads the Federal Register or a legislative office that watches for funding opportunities. This means that your applicants will be a self-selected group of savvy operators who do not necessarily represent the acme of innovative thinking in education. The department will need to reach out energetically to find educators who may be terrific at running schools but are not well connected politically.

- Be wary of anything that calls itself a "movement." Almost by nature, innovators tend to have a missionary spirit. This is their job. Their zeal gives them energy and purpose. It is the job of federal officials to soberly evaluate claims for federal funding, without regard to the passion of the claimants.

- Check your ideology at the door. Be prepared to fund innovations that come from perspectives that differ from your own, as long as they can persuade you and peer reviewers that their plans might produce workable and effective programs.

- Make sure that the members of peer review panels are not part of an old-boy network of professional innovators who are likely to take care of their friends and share their biases and their penchant for rhetorical flights of pedagogical fancy.

The great thing about America is that there is no shortage of risk-takers and innovators. Education, like other sectors, is blessed with people who are ready to blaze new trails, try new ideas, depart from established routines. These innovators are working in cities and school districts across the nation. They are innovating because they believe in it.

Important new experiments are constantly coming to the fore, as educators seek ways to improve achievement, to restructure the delivery of educational services, and to make education more effective for all children. Charter schools, for example, are one of the most significant innovations of the past 15 years. The revival of small schools in big cities, not technically an innovation but certainly a departure from the recent past, is another important change. New technologies hold major promise for meeting the needs of children with disabilities. The KIPP academies, with their cohesive and replicable program, are another promising innovation.

So, yes, we need more innovation, because we cannot be satisfied with the present functioning of our education system, neither in urban centers nor even in affluent suburbs, where scores may be high but academic engagement is not. Innovation allows us to take a stand against complacency and stagnation and to seek ever higher levels of success.

Still, those who fund innovation must address a troubling dilemma. Put simply, if evidence of effectiveness is a prerequisite for funding, are we truly supporting innovation or an already established program? Then again, unless we insist on some evidence of effectiveness, can we be sure that we aren't funding a series of harebrained schemes? The challenge for the Department of Education is to support well-designed, promising improvements in American educational practice without frittering away federal funds on one-shot hot ideas and hucksters. I hope the skeptics, myself included, are proved wrong.

–Diane Ravitch is a research professor at New York University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. This essay is adapted from an April 2003 speech delivered at a Harvard conference sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"*The Independent Review is excellent.*"

— **GARY S. BECKER**, Nobel Laureate in Economics

Transcending the all-too-common superficiality of public policy research and debate, *The INDEPENDENT REVIEW* is the widely acclaimed quarterly, peer-reviewed journal devoted to excellence in the study of political economy and the critical analysis of government policy. Edited by **Robert Higgs**, *The INDEPENDENT REVIEW* is superbly written, provocative, and based on solid peer-reviewed scholarship.

Probing the most difficult and pressing of social and economic questions, *The INDEPENDENT REVIEW* boldly challenges the politicization and bureaucratization of our world, featuring in-depth examinations of current policy questions by many of the world's outstanding scholars and policy experts. Undaunted and uncompromising, this is *the* journal that is pioneering future debate!

*"**The Independent Review** is of great interest."*
— C. VANN WOODWARD, Pulitzer Prize-Winner, Yale University

*"I really enjoy reading **The Independent Review**."*
— JOYCE APPLEBY, Professor of History, UCLA

*"**The Independent Review** is distinctive in badly needed ways."*
— LELAND YEAGER, Professor of Economics, Auburn University

"The most exciting new intellectual journal in many years."
— WILLIAM NISKANEN, Chairman, Cato Institute

"A great team, economic logic and tough analysis."
— BRUCE YANDLE, Former Executive Director, Fed.Trade Comm.

*"**The Independent Review** is excellent, diverse, and wide-ranging."*
— IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ, Prof. of Sociology, Rutgers University

In Recent Issues:

Medicare's Progeny: The 1996 Health Care Legislation
— CHARLOTTE TWIGHT

Does Modernization Require Westernization?
— DEEPAK LAL

Democracy and War
— RUDY RUMMEL AND TED GALEN CARPENTER

Liberty and Feminism
— RICHARD A. EPSTEIN

A New Democrat? The Economic Performance of the Clinton Admin.
— JOHN W. BURNS AND ANDREW J. TAYLOR

A Free Market in Kidneys: Efficient and Equitable
— WILLIAM BARNETT, MICHAEL SALIBA AND DEBORAH WALKER

Racism, Railroad Unions and Regulation
— DAVID E. BERNSTEIN

The School-Choice Choices
— JOHN D. MERRIFIELD

The Immigration Problem: Then and Now
— RICHARD VEDDER, LOWELL GALLAWAY, AND STEPHEN MOORE

Eco-Industrial Parks: The Case for Private Planning
— PIERRE DESROCHERS

- ✦ Feature Articles
- ✦ Book Reviews
- ✦ Special Features
- ✦ Figures and Tables
- ✦ 160 Pages per Issue
- ✦ March, June, Sept. & Dec.
- ✦ Annual Index
- ✦ Plus more . . .

Individual Subscriptions:
$28.95/1 year, $52.95/2 year
Institutional Subscriptions:
$83.95/1 year, $158.95/2 year
International Orders:
Add $28/subscription shipping

Order Toll-Free (U.S.)

800-927-8733

Phone: **510-632-1366**
Fax: **510-568-6040**
review@independent.org
http://www.independent.org

The INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE

100 Swan Way, Dept. A65
Oakland, CA 94621-1428 USA

Look for *The INDEPENDENT REVIEW* on better newsstands and in bookstores!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AUTISM
and the Inclusion Mandate

What happens when children with severe disabilities like autism are taught in regular classrooms? Daniel knows

by ANN CHRISTY DYBVIK

Daniel walks into his kindergarten classroom and drops his outerwear, backpack, and bus harness in a tangled heap in the middle of the floor. Daniel has a singular focus this morning: building a bridge and a house out of Lincoln Logs.

He does not notice as classmates step around or over him as he plays on the hard floor. If other children move into his space, he pushes them away. One or two children greet him, but he does not answer. Daniel keeps up a running dialogue as he plays, in jargon rarely understandable to anyone but himself.

Daniel's educational aide approaches him and, using a handmade schedule book with symbolic pictures, shows Daniel that this is not the time for playing. The first picture on the schedule is a locker, indicating that Daniel is to hang up his coat and backpack. Transitions to new activities are very difficult for Daniel, and he begins to scream and kick. Other children watch quietly or walk away.

Daniel is autistic. He is charming, intelligent, creative, and full of energy, just like his 18 classmates. However, he is unable to use language to interact with others. His rare attempts at communication are through imitation and usually in only one or two words. Teachers and aides communicate with Daniel using a combination of picture symbols and words, since children with autism learn best visually. Like other children with autism, Daniel would not understand the activities of the day without his schedule book. When events change and the day does not correspond to his schedule, Daniel may lose control and throw a tantrum. He requires the support of an educational assistant every minute of the school day.

In the past—indeed, less than ten years ago—children like Daniel were rarely placed in mainstream classrooms to learn alongside their nondisabled peers. Children with autism and other severe disabilities were more likely to be found in separate classrooms with other children with disabilities, if not in a different school altogether. Daniel's presence in a regular classroom, with the help of an educational aide, is the result of the "inclusion" movement among advocates for the disabled. The idea behind inclusion is that every child should be an equally valued member of the school culture. Children with disabilities benefit

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IMAGES.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from learning in a regular classroom, while their peers benefit from being exposed to children with a diversity of talents and temperaments.

As a result of evolving legislation and educational initiatives, today more than 95 percent of students with physical, emotional, learning, cognitive, visual, and hearing disabilities receive some or all of their education in regular classrooms. As of 2000–01, the most recent year for which data are available, 47 percent of students with disabilities spent at least 80 percent of their school day in the general-education classroom, up from 31 percent in 1988–89.

These numbers have even greater significance for students with autism. Autism is the fastest-growing disability in the country. U.S. Department of Education statistics show the number of children diagnosed with autism being served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act growing more than fivefold during the 1990s (see Figure 1). The California Department of Developmental Services estimates that the number of diagnosed cases in that state grew 273 percent during the 1990s.

What accounts for the increase in autism? No one knows. In the past, autism was considered an extremely rare condition. Children and adults who demonstrated characteristics similar to what we now call autism were often labeled as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed, or cognitively disabled. Most lived in institutions when they became too difficult to manage at home. Many factors are cited for the increase in autism, including better diagnostic procedures; heightened awareness of the syndrome, leading to more accurate assessments; exposure to environmental toxins; reactions to childhood vaccinations; and a genuine increase in the condition's prevalence.

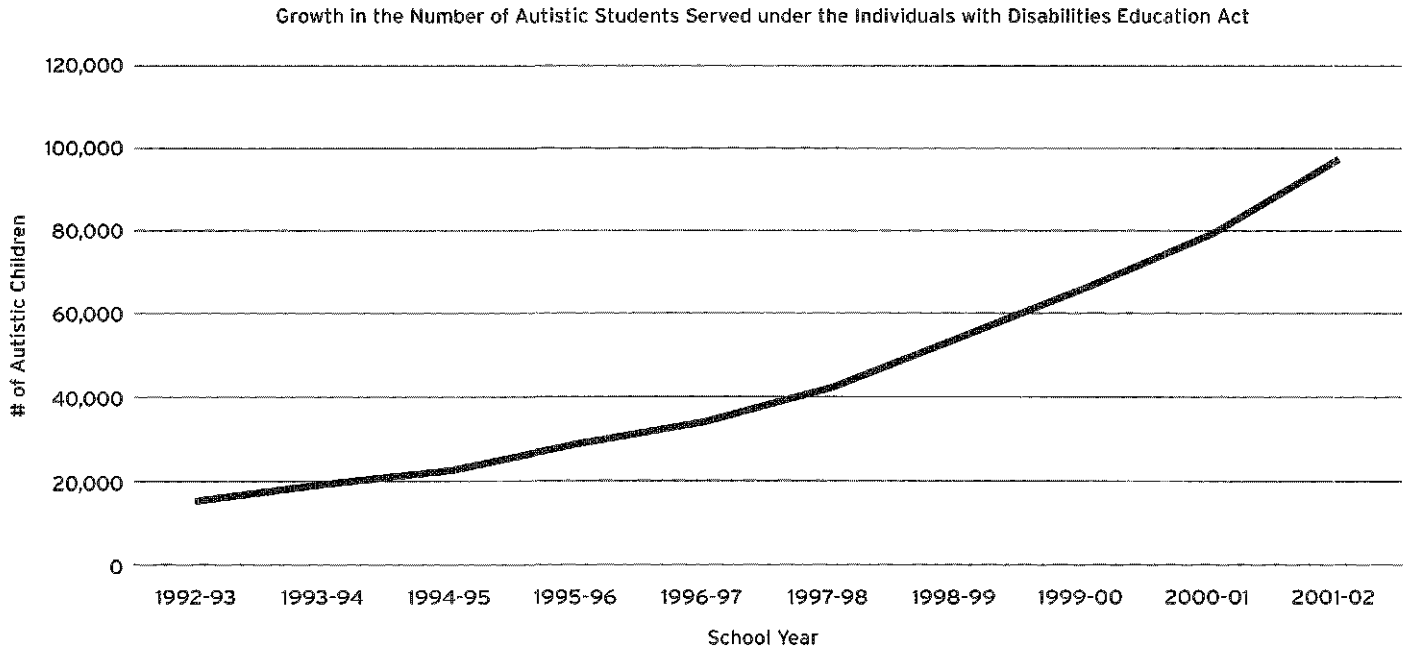
As statistics on autism continue to rise, so does its impact on public schools (see Figure 2). Inclusion forces regular-classroom teachers to face challenges for which they were never properly trained. It demands a higher degree of coordination and planning among regular and special-education teachers, yet few school systems allot the time and resources to promote these exchanges. Many teachers worry that they are shortchanging their other students when they must cope with the meltdowns of a student like Daniel or must modify a lesson to reach students with learning disabilities. Disagreement remains over whether disabled students actually benefit from inclusive classrooms. The increase in the number of students with disabilities being schooled in mainstream classrooms has happened almost imperceptibly; teachers whisper their concerns for fear of seeming coldhearted. How did this quiet revolution come about, and what must be done to make it work?

The Press for Civil Rights

After a dark history of excluding students with disabilities from regular public schools, Congress in 1975 passed the Edu-

Autism on the Rise (Figure 1)

Over the last decade, the number of students diagnosed with autism in America's schools has increased more than fivefold.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The idea behind inclusion is that every child should be an equally valued member of the school culture.

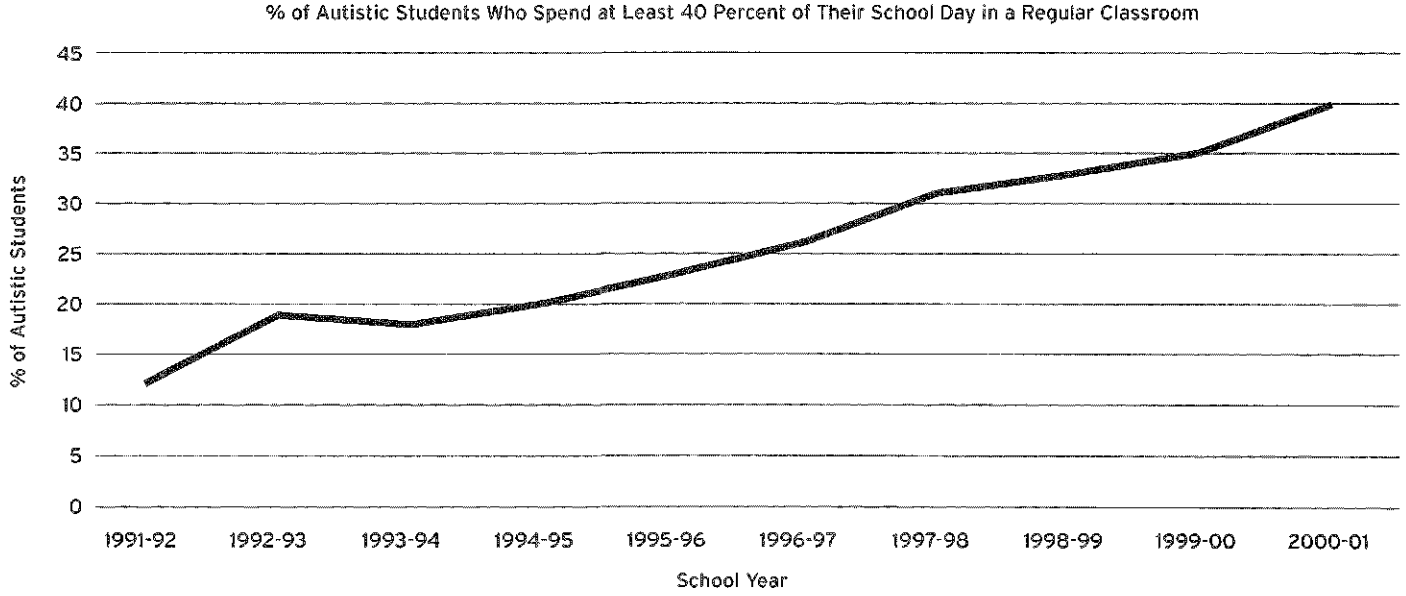
cation for All Handicapped Children Act, guaranteeing all children, regardless of disability, the right to a "free and appropriate public education" in the "least restrictive environment." The "special education" law, as it came to be known, is a civil-rights statute. As such, it enables students with disabilities and their parents or guardians to be deeply involved in the design of their educational program. Parents who disagree with school officials over how their children's needs will be met can take their grievances through a process of mediation and, if necessary, to the courts. Over time, key court decisions, as well as later revisions to the federal law and regulations issued by federal agencies, have spelled out the rights of students and the obligations of school districts.

For most of the short history of special education, the common practice was to pull children with disabilities out of regular classrooms for some or even all of the school day. In what is called a "resource room," they would receive instruction from teachers trained to modify their instructional techniques depending on the nature of the child's disability. It seemed more efficient to provide specialized instruction in separate classrooms, where children with disabilities could receive individualized attention without having to alter the mainstream curriculum that their peers received.

However, the pull-out approach met with increasing criticism over the years. In 1986, Madeleine Will, then the assistant secretary of the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, proposed that greater efforts be made to educate children with mild or moderate disabilities in regular classrooms. Will felt that regular classroom teachers would not need to change their teaching methods drastically; accommodations or adaptations to the regular curriculum could reasonably be made. This concept, which provided a foundation for the inclusive classroom, was termed the Regular Education Initiative. During the past decade or so, students with mild disabilities have largely been included in the regular classroom, with their assignments modified to ensure their participation at some level. However, children with severe disabilities, like autism, continued to receive the major part of their education in separate classrooms, sometimes joining their classmates for art, music, or physical education, depending on the attitudes of the teachers and the severity of the child's disability.

The Impact of the Inclusion Movement (Figure 2)

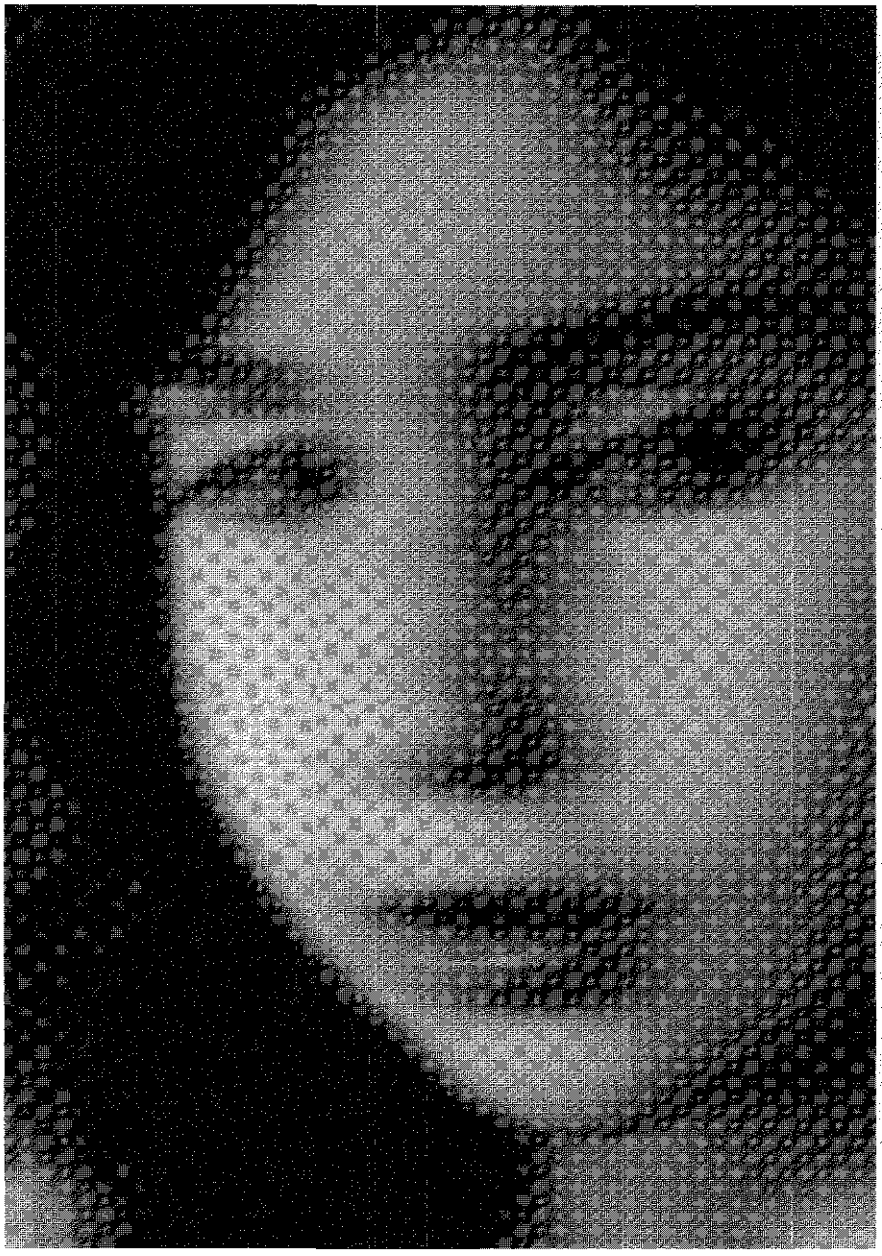
A tripling in the share of autistic children who spend a substantial portion of the school day in the mainstream classroom has strained regular classroom teachers, who are seldom trained to meet their needs.



Note: Reporting on autism was optional in 1991-92.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Inclusion forces regular classroom teachers to face challenges for which they were never properly trained.



In 1997, the reauthorization of the federal special-education law, now renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, affirmed the federal commitment to inclusion. IDEA required that children with disabilities be educated "to the maximum extent possible" in the "least restrictive environment." While the word "inclusion" cannot be found in the text of IDEA, the law reflected a set of beliefs and aspirations signaling that the "least restrictive environment" is the general-education classroom—for all children, regardless of disability. The individual needs of each child with a disability must be considered when the individual education plan (IEP) is written, and the IEP team needs to consider the general classroom as the starting point. If the child's needs cannot be met there, a full explanation must be provided in the IEP, a legal document. Proponents of "full inclusion," a stronger view of the law, consider placement in the general-education classroom as the only point. Advocates of full inclusion believe that all services needed by children should be provided in the general-education classroom. Congress is currently debating another reauthorization of IDEA, but no major changes to the inclusion mandates are being considered.

Of all the public education initiatives over the past decade, inclusion may be the most value-laden and belief-driven. It has challenged and changed basic assumptions and practice. Regular-classroom teachers are now being asked to plan for a wider range of needs and abilities among their students. Responsibility for the education of children with disabilities is supposed to be shared between regular and special-education teachers, and teachers are increasingly working in teams rather than running their own classrooms. Many more specialists are working with children—in classrooms that once were the almost private domains of individual teachers. The reality is that teachers who were never trained to deal with children like Daniel are being told that they must comply or leave. Overwhelming? To many teachers it is.

Classroom Challenges

In many ways, inclusion is a noble endeavor. Proponents of inclusion rightly stress the importance of all children, their value as members of the human community, and their right to belong and to be included, no matter what their individual differ-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ences and abilities may be. Inclusion's supporters believe that the values taught to students in an inclusive classroom are of vital importance in the education of all students. They insist that the acceptance and understanding of one another as diverse individuals with differing abilities is one of the primary goals of education. "Inclusion is consistent with multicultural educations, and [with] a world in which many more people have opportunities to know, play, and work with one another," writes Mara Sapon-Shevin, a professor of education at the University of Rochester and an advocate for inclusive education.

At the same time, parents long for their disabled children to have friendships with classmates and to participate in all the normal social activities of childhood: playing together, talking and joking, dreaming of the future, and developing lasting relationships.

The fiercely emotional nature of these arguments renders it difficult to criticize the practice of inclusion. Those who make the attempt often find their fundamental beliefs regarding tolerance and diversity coming under fire. But those harboring doubts about inclusion do not generally question the values behind it, only whether the practice is effective. Special education came about for a reason, they claim. Some children cannot learn by traditional teaching methods or through a standard curriculum. They need individualized instruction designed for their specific learning styles. Certified special-education teachers receive their professional training in methods designed to meet these unique needs. Since the regular classroom is geared toward the norm, they argue, it is not the appropriate place for children with special learning needs.

Indeed, the regular classroom is becoming even more standardized as schools adjust to meet the testing and accountability mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Yet the inclusion movement has placed children with wide-ranging abilities and needs in the same classroom. This leads many teachers and educators to ask how a standardized curriculum can be adapted to meet every child's needs—without harming their school's all-important test scores. They also wonder whether the educational needs of many students are taking a back seat to the broader social goals of inclusion.

To see how these challenges and tensions are playing out in classrooms across the nation, let's take another look at Daniel. By following Daniel through his day, we can map his program against the best practices for inclusion and see how his small Wisconsin school district measures up.

Daniel has a full-time educational aide, known as a "paraprofessional," to support him during the school day. He also receives help from a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist, and an adaptive physical education teacher. Daniel's kindergarten teacher, who is in her second year of teaching, has a class of 19 students. Two of her students have significant special needs, while one other is learning English as a second language. She holds a bachelor's degree in education and is certified to teach kindergarten through 5th grade. During her training, she took one class on teaching students with disabilities. Her district has provided nothing more. Daniel's teacher is enthusiastic and creative in her teaching, but she knows nothing about how to adapt a curriculum to the learning style of a child with disabilities.

Daniel's regular classroom teacher is supposed to collaborate with the school's special-education teacher to design an appropriate program. Yet the special-education teacher herself has had no extra training in autism or in curriculum adaptation. Furthermore, she does not work with Daniel, but merely assigns the paraprofessional, named Jon, to carry out his program. She has four years until retirement and does not intend to invest any more time or money in learning how to work with autistic children. She states this openly. The school district's director of special education knows this but does nothing.

Many educators ask how a standardized curriculum can be adapted to meet every child's needs—without harming their school's all-important test scores.

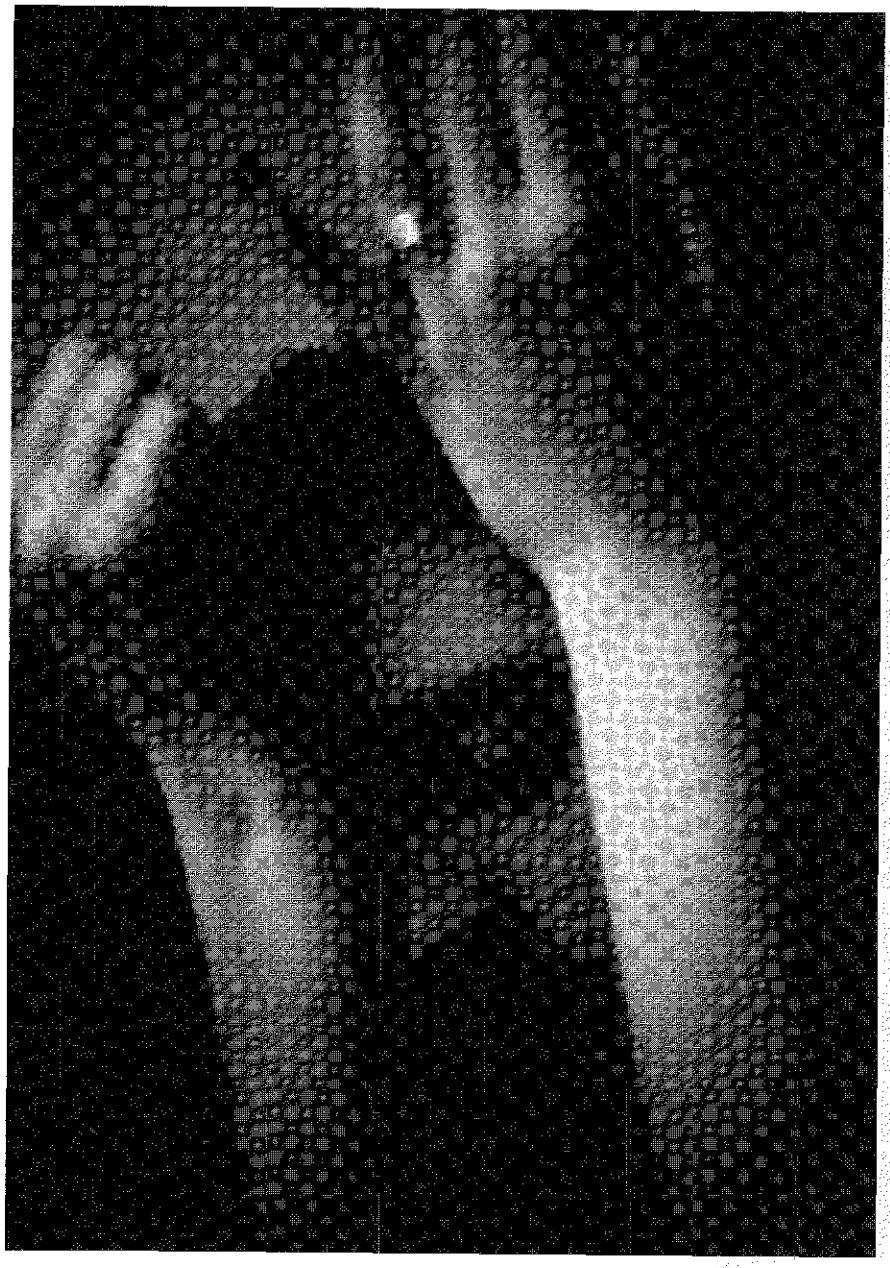
How much training has Daniel's paraprofessional had? Again, none. Jon is a former art major, now working as a special-education aide in the public schools. He too is willing, creative, and caring. But he knows little about how to handle a child with autism. He deals with Daniel's tantrums as he would those of his own son. He does not understand the characteristics of autism or know which teaching methods would be effective. Even so, he is in charge of Daniel's entire educational program. Jon decides when Daniel stays in the regular classroom and how discipline is administered. Jon tries to get Daniel to comply in a classroom that is not designed for a child with Daniel's needs. As any teacher trained in autism knows, children with autism need structure. But Daniel's teacher is not trained in autism and does not have the collaboration and support of the special-education teacher. She does not understand how important consistency and structure are to his overall learning needs. So Jon does what he can. He has a large responsibility and a paraprofessional's paycheck.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Daniel's team of teachers meets once every two weeks for half an hour. During this time they discuss not only Daniel but also the 18 other children they are responsible for. Teachers are given no extra planning time during the day, so this half hour is all the time together most of them can manage. In fact, the district has cut back on the amount of time allowed for school aides to work. Thus the people who work most closely with the children are not able to attend collaboration meetings unless they do so on their own time.

Daniel's teachers were not asked or permitted to participate in shared planning before the implementation of inclusion. It came as a directive from the administration, a top-down model that many feel was driven by budget constraints rather than altruistic or visionary motives. A one-page position paper on inclusion was written and distributed by the district's director of special education two years ago. It remains buried on most educators' desks.

The problem is, while many administrators feel that inclusion will save money, in reality the opposite is true. Well-implemented inclusion usually costs more than separate special-education classrooms. Why? When children with special educational needs are included in the regular classroom, they need extra support. Paraprofessionals and teachers must provide this support across many classrooms. Administrators may need to reduce the number of children in a class to adjust for the added physical and instructional accommodations needed for a child with a disability. The cost of personnel rises, along with the costs of materials, adaptive equipment and technology, and training for staff.



Inclusion is supposed to promote socialization and acceptance. This presents a great challenge for Daniel. Daniel has autism, a disorder of social communication. As a result, he does not play with his classmates, eat with them at lunch, or go to their homes after school. He may want friends, but his disorder prevents him from knowing what to say or do with them. The other children accept Daniel in their class, but on a different level. They jump in and help Daniel with his work. So, instead of learning independence and group skills from his peers, Daniel learns dependence. The other children have also witnessed Daniel's screaming and tantrums and kicking. They are not entirely sure why he acts this way, so they often keep their distance. Do they understand Daniel or call him at home to play? No. Time will tell if this will change.

Making Inclusion Work

Daniel's program is clearly an example of inclusion implemented badly. It demonstrates what Diane Twachtman-Cullen, a speech pathologist at the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Consultation Center in Cromwell, Connecticut, calls the "worst practices in inclusion." These include:

- Insisting on inclusion at all costs.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

- Settling for a mere physical presence in the classroom.
- Giving priority to the inclusive education model over the individual needs of children.
- Providing little or no training to staff.
- Keeping the paraprofessional out of the loop.
- Teaching rote information so that the student can pass mandated tests instead of teaching needed skills.
- Watering down curriculum.
- Failing to teach peers about the nature of disabilities and how to interact with peers who have a disability.

These ineffective implementation practices, writes Greg Conderman, associate professor of special education at the University of Wisconsin, "contaminate a potentially powerful tool" for educating a child with special needs. Conderman argues that supporters of inclusion have pursued "equal treatment instead of equal opportunity," resulting in a lack of access to a continuum of services based on disabled students' individual needs. Conderman believes that parents must pay greater attention to the implementation of inclusion policies. Since inclusion means different things to different people, there are few if any mandated guidelines for what inclusion should look like. He argues that by pushing for equal treatment, advocates may have successfully obtained placement in general-education classrooms for children with disabilities, but at the same time have unintentionally denied them the right to individualized education programs. The concept of "place" has taken priority over "how" children are taught. A "one option" approach cannot work for children with diverse needs; a variety of service delivery options must exist so that programs can be written to meet the needs of each child. If inclusion becomes a program unto itself, then that is just as coercive as trying to place all children with disabilities in separate schools or classrooms.

Perhaps shoddy implementation is the reason why the evidence on inclusion's effectiveness is so mixed. James Kauffman, a professor of special education at the University of Virginia, argued in a 1995 interview that "there is no credible research showing that the regular education classroom can actually provide superior services for kids with disabilities." He added, "There are children who are dumped into classrooms in the name of inclusion, when in fact nothing is in place to make that an inclusive classroom except that they put a child with significant disabilities in it."

The first step toward implementing inclusion properly is to improve the training of teachers. Teacher-training programs for regular and special-education teachers often coexist within colleges of education, but rarely are classes jointly taught by regular and special-education professors. These programs must begin to cross boundaries and integrate instruction, just as the public schools are being asked to do. Classes need to focus on a variety of teaching strategies designed to address the range and abilities of the students with whom these future teachers will work. In other words, the university setting must mirror the classrooms the teachers will eventually lead.

Moreover, the goals—and effectiveness—of inclusion must be determined by each child's individual education plan, or IEP, the outline of their educational program that schools are mandated to create. Children who qualify for special education are evaluated by a team of highly trained professionals. This team discusses its results in collaboration with the parents and identifies the strengths and areas of need for that particular child. They then develop goals, which are written and reviewed annually.

The program developed for each student depends on his or her unique needs. Every program should look different. A goal for Daniel may be to increase his functional communication skills so that he can participate in social activities with his peers. He may learn to ask a friend to play, or to request help from a teacher, or to tell the class what he did over the weekend. By contrast, a goal for children with cerebral palsy, a brain disorder that typically manifests itself in difficulty with speech and physical coordination, may be to work on correct hand, arm, or seating positions that will allow them to use an augmentative communication system. A child with a learning disability may have goals in the areas of improving reading and math skills. The problem with trying to measure the effectiveness of inclusion lies with the diversity of our children. What needs to be determined is whether inclusion helps each individual child reach the goals outlined in the IEP.

The problem with trying to measure the effectiveness of inclusion lies with the diversity of our children.

It is crucial to recognize that inclusion means different things to different people. To the parents of a child with a cognitive disability, it may mean learning to say "hello" or "Can I play with you?" to nondisabled peers. To the parents of a child with a learning disability, it may mean that their child will receive accommodations to the general curriculum and will have an opportunity to go to college. And to parents of a child like Daniel, inclusion may simply mean that he learns to adjust to the many daily changes of a busy classroom and develops the ability to play with his classmates.

–Ann Christy Dybvik is a speech and language pathologist and autism resource consultant in western Wisconsin. She has been working on behalf of students with disabilities and their families for 20 years.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE Knowledge Guild

Teachers will learn that industrial-style unionism and genuine professionalism don't mix

by DENIS P. DOYLE

TEACHING ASPIRES TO BECOME A PROFESsion, yet it faces two daunting obstacles. First, public school teachers cling to unprofessional salary schedules and terms of employment that make it impossible to pay them based on their performance and market demand. Second, the unions that bargain these terms are modeled not on professional associations, but on the industrial unions of the early and mid-20th century. The right model for the teacher unions is the medieval craftsman guilds, the hallmarks of which were professional ability and demonstrated accomplishment.

The unions—namely the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA), plus their various local satellites—stand in the way of professionalism through sins of both commission and omission. Contrary to popular opinion, their sins of omission present the more serious problem.

The unions' sins of commission have largely to do with bread-and-butter issues of salary and job protections. For today's public school teachers, unlike most professionals, time in the saddle rather than performance determines where they work, how much they are paid, and whether they can be fired. Imagine a symphony orchestra in which the first violin automatically goes to the most senior violinist (or worse yet, to the most senior musician, regardless of instrument). This is what happens in most school districts, where senior teachers often get

ILLUSTRATION BY ROB SAUNDERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED.

to pick their schools and the courses they teach.

The unions' sins of omission are revealed in their lack of interest in the life of the mind. No one would accuse most public schools of being communities of scholars. Attended by unwilling and bored students, they are staffed by workers rather than professionals. It was not teachers or their unions who led the fight for academic standards or for rigorous testing for themselves or their students. They did not fight the relentless consolidation of schools and school districts during the 20th century. Nor do they actively support rationalization of the clock and calendar; they continue to work to agrarian rhythms in a high-tech era. Perhaps most important is their failure to demand technologies that increase output.

If anyone doubts the lack of interest in intellectual pursuits among public educators, consider this true story. A member of Congress for whom I once worked, Leo Ryan, had been a public school teacher in Nebraska, where he rose to become the youngest superintendent in the state. When he discovered that teachers' pay in California was higher than superintendents' pay in Nebraska, he headed west in a hurry. But when he arrived he discovered that without a California credential he could not accept the teaching job he had been offered (let alone become a California superintendent). He was forced to forgo teaching in summer school (and the income associated with it) and take a bevy of mindless courses to get his credential. He never forgave the state licensing authorities. When he became a state legislator years later, he sponsored legislation that transformed the licensing system. On the coffee table in his office, he displayed a bound dissertation as an example of just how bogus he thought graduate education degrees were: the title was "The Use and Placement of the Pencil Sharpener in the Elementary School Classroom."

Psychic Income

In contrast to the teacher union is the solitary teacher, portrayed with uncommon sympathy and insight by Ted Sizer in *Horace's Compromise*. Sizer paints a compelling and dispiriting portrait of the teacher who tries to rise above the mendacity of the system. His most powerful tool is the "deal" he makes with students; he will not disturb them if they return the favor. He meets the ambitious and curious student on her own ground but leaves the surly and turned-off student to his own devices. The conundrum is captured by Seymour Fliegel, president of the Center for Educational Innovation, when he reminds us that too often the teacher says, "I taught him to swim, but he still sinks."

The teacher unions are caught in a time warp, not yet recognizing that their success in the last half of the 20th century is the path to failure in the 21st.

The problem is compounded by two circumstances. Many teachers enter the ranks for the same humdrum reasons people find employment in the larger labor market—propinquity, accident, force of habit, good or bad advice, inertia, convenience. This collection of motives does not inspire much confidence, but neither does it guarantee mediocrity. People who casually enter the teaching workforce may nonetheless become inspired teachers. But no matter how or why individuals become teachers, there is no conceivable way to recruit and retain three million Mr. Chips. As management guru Peter Drucker observes, the challenge of mass education is to get ordinary people to do extraordinary things, teachers no less than students.

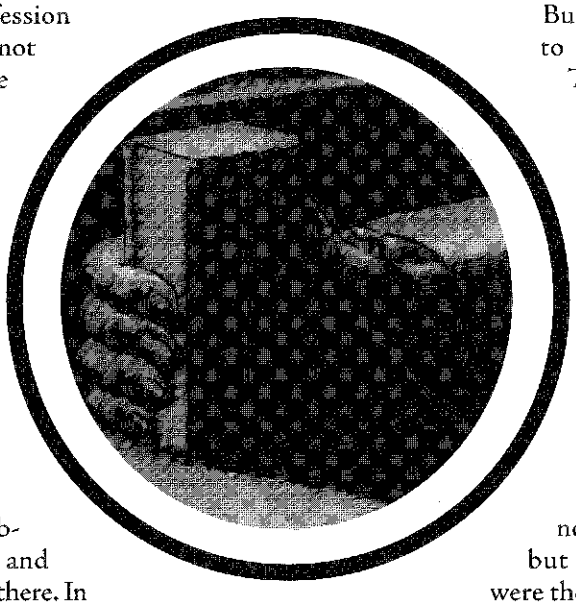
More to the point of this essay, however, is that many of the people who are attracted to teaching find it appealing because they want to do good, not necessarily well. These are the people who define the enterprise. For such people, teaching is a vocation, which, as Webster's reminds us, comes from the Latin *vocatio*, or summons, bidding, invitation. These are the teachers who aspire to be professionals, which as Webster's also reminds us has a special meaning. A profession is:

> *A calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation including instruction in skills and methods as well as in the scientific, historical, or scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods, maintaining by force of organization or concerted opinion high standards of achievement and conduct, and committing its members to continued study and to a kind of work*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which has for its prime purpose the rendering of a public service.

The empirical basis of this formulation is revealed by the simple fact that the lion's share of teachers' income is, as economists say, psychic rather than real. In other words, teachers are often compensated in ways that do not involve money—by enjoying the work and making a difference in students' lives. To be sure, real income is important, but psychic income is even more important. This condition explains why good teachers go into the profession and why they stay. But if teachers do not live by bread alone, they do not live without bread either. This explains why teachers join unions, particularly when they are working in large, impersonal bureaucracies.



Consider the fact that teachers almost universally discount their wages in order to teach in private schools. They teach for less than their public school counterparts because their sense of professional efficacy is greater. Both state regulations and union contracts have produced such a deprofessionalized teaching environment in the public schools that it takes higher pay and more benefits to get and keep teachers there. In the other learned professions, the opposite phenomenon obtains. Doctors, accountants, and lawyers often discount their wages in the public sector as a training regimen or because they find the work more enjoyable. When they enter the private sector, where, as many corporate lawyers will tell you, the work is far less fulfilling, they do so with the expectation of greater income. In education's public sector, by contrast, the work is actually less interesting than it is in private schools, where teachers enjoy more control over the curriculum and more autonomy in the classroom. As a result, teachers are willing to work for less in the private sector.

A New Metaphor for Teaching

The deprofessionalized atmosphere in public schools also helps to explain why teachers join unions modeled on the industrial unions of skilled and semiskilled workers rather than medieval guilds or modern professional associations. Rather than working as sole proprietors or in small professional partnerships, teachers must negotiate with remote managers of large organizations, as an autoworker at Ford would. They don't control entry to their profession, as lawyers and doctors do, so they must find other means of battling for higher wages and better benefits.

But teaching as a profession is doomed to fail as an assembly-line enterprise. The assembly line was created by Henry Ford for a reason: to make work so routinized and simple that anyone with deft hands, a strong back, and an adequate constitution could perform it. Ford's workforce was made up of internal migrants (from the countryside to the city) and immigrants from overseas, workers who were neither skilled nor socialized to the emerging industrial era. They shared one trait, an eagerness to work for wages. The assembly line not only created interchangeable parts, but was also manned by workers who were themselves interchangeable. The skilled guild member, by contrast, had a talent that was the antithesis of the assembly line, the ability to create unique objects. Imagine buying a "signed" car or dishwasher.

As management guru Peter Drucker observes, the challenge of mass education is to get ordinary people to do extraordinary things, teachers no less than students.

This same impulse led to the early 20th-century efforts to "teacher proof" the classroom. During the heyday of scientific management, the production

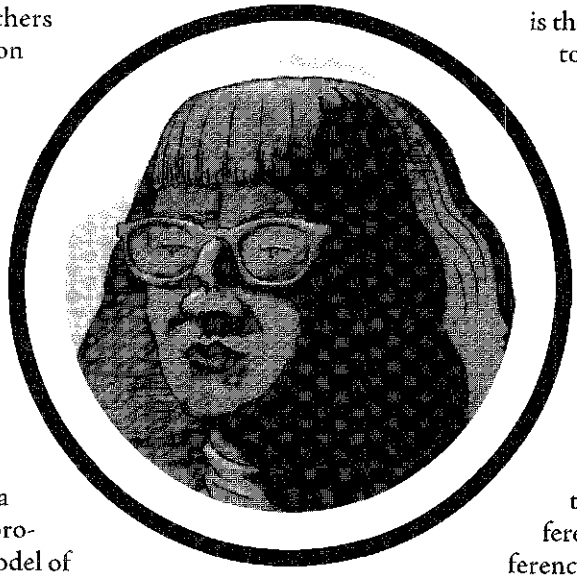
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

line became the metaphor of choice in education—teachers are the workers, students the products, administrators the foremen and straw bosses, school board members the board of directors, and taxpayers the shareholders. The task of teacher trainers—the school of education—was to make the work of the teacher so carefully scripted that anyone could do

Teachers' work in public schools is actually less interesting than in private schools, where they enjoy more control over the curriculum.

it. This impulse is still with us, having reappeared most recently in the school district of which I am an alumnus, Chicago. A major reform of then-superintendent Paul Vallas (now superintendent of the Philadelphia schools) was to "script" the curriculum for elementary-school teachers across the district. While this action was a necessary throwback to the last century, it demonstrates how intellectually impoverished modern schooling is.

Commenting on the production-line metaphor, Al Shanker tartly observed that if one quarter of the "products" don't reach the end of the assembly line and another quarter don't work when they get there, you don't improve output by running the line faster and longer. It is time to abandon the factory model and replace it with a more appropriate one. Indeed, if a production metaphor is called for, the model of choice would be the human capital–rich environment in Silicon Valley's information technology shops. In the factory of the 20th century, at day's end the owner locked the gates to secure his capital. In today's high-tech firm, at day's end the "capital" goes home to have a drink. The wealth in the modern firm is human, not physical, capital.



Raising Productivity

While productivity improves regularly in Silicon Valley, and its products in turn raise the rest of the nation's productivity, teacher unions have refused to entertain the notion of increasing output with a given set of inputs. At a minimum this requires new technologies and new techniques, the substitution of capital for labor, and the substitution of cheaper for more expensive labor. Teachers must take a page from the farmer's book and use science and common sense to increase output. Educators need the equivalent of the tractor, contour plowing, and hybridization. There is some discussion within the profession and some provisional use of distinctions among teachers along a qualitative spectrum—with corresponding salary differentials—as there is among lawyers and doctors, but the talk is still mainly just talk.

The idea of senior or master teachers' overseeing the training and induction of probationary teachers is so obvious that its absence is unforgivable. Indeed, one of the great strengths of the artist's guild is the progression from apprentice to novice to journeyman to master. It is removed in name only from the world of medicine, where the student progresses from medical school to intern, resident, head resident, staff physician, and head of service. And in many hospitals, doctors are too valuable to be drafted into administrative positions. Instead, professional hospital administrators are hired who are not themselves medical doctors; typically they report to a committee of physicians.

Another way to improve productivity, where computers can make a difference in education (or could make a difference), is to actively substitute computers for teachers. Not one for one (though as computerized instruction gains in power and finesse that could occur), but as a way to relieve teachers of trivial activities and to provide anytime, anywhere instructional resources for students. This is hardly a new idea among policy wonks and computer buffs, but it is not actively pursued by teachers or their organizations.

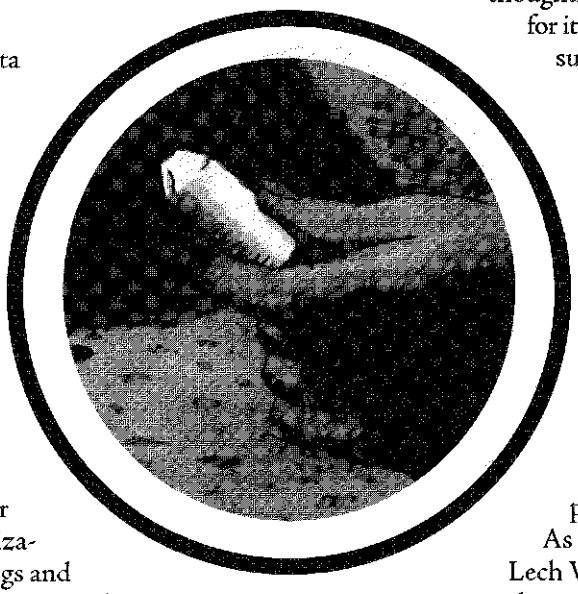
The failure to grapple with issues of productivity

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(or the value added by teaching) makes it impossible to tie compensation to productivity increases, as occurs in the rest of the economy.

New Developments

As Bruce Cooper and Marie-Elena Liotta observe in their fine monograph *Urban Teacher Unions Face Their Future*, the AFT and the NEA are mature organizations. While in their modern incarnation they are only half a century old, they may be so ossified by now that they can no longer change. They are caught in a time warp, not yet recognizing that their success in the last half of the 20th century is the path to failure in the 21st. There is as yet no coherent vision of what the profession is or should become. The teacher unions are trapped in archaic organizational models characterized by buildings and districts that are too large and too fragmented, compulsory attendance, the 180-day school year, the 50-minute period, age-grouping of students in 13 discrete grades, few performance or standards-based activities, and inaccurate assumptions about the dangers of privatization.



Whither the teacher unions? There is always the possibility, however remote, that thoughtful change will occur. The embodiment of this possibility is found in two organizations, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the competing American Board for Certification of Teaching Excellence. Both boards self-consciously attempt to take a page from medicine's book. At the beginning of the 20th century, medicine was much like education today: more art than science. As the practice of medicine matured, the various subdisciplines within it began to clean their own houses, beginning with the ophthalmologists, the first doctors to establish specialized board certification.

Similarly, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards offers an advanced certificate that is supposed to signal mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective teacher. The National Board is now more than a decade old and growing rapidly. While it is silent on the key question of "value added," the board establishes an important set of precedents, namely that the "profession"—with some advice from thoughtful outsiders—can establish standards for itself and wrestle with some tough issues surrounding performance identification and documentation. It also establishes the principle that some teachers should be paid more than others.

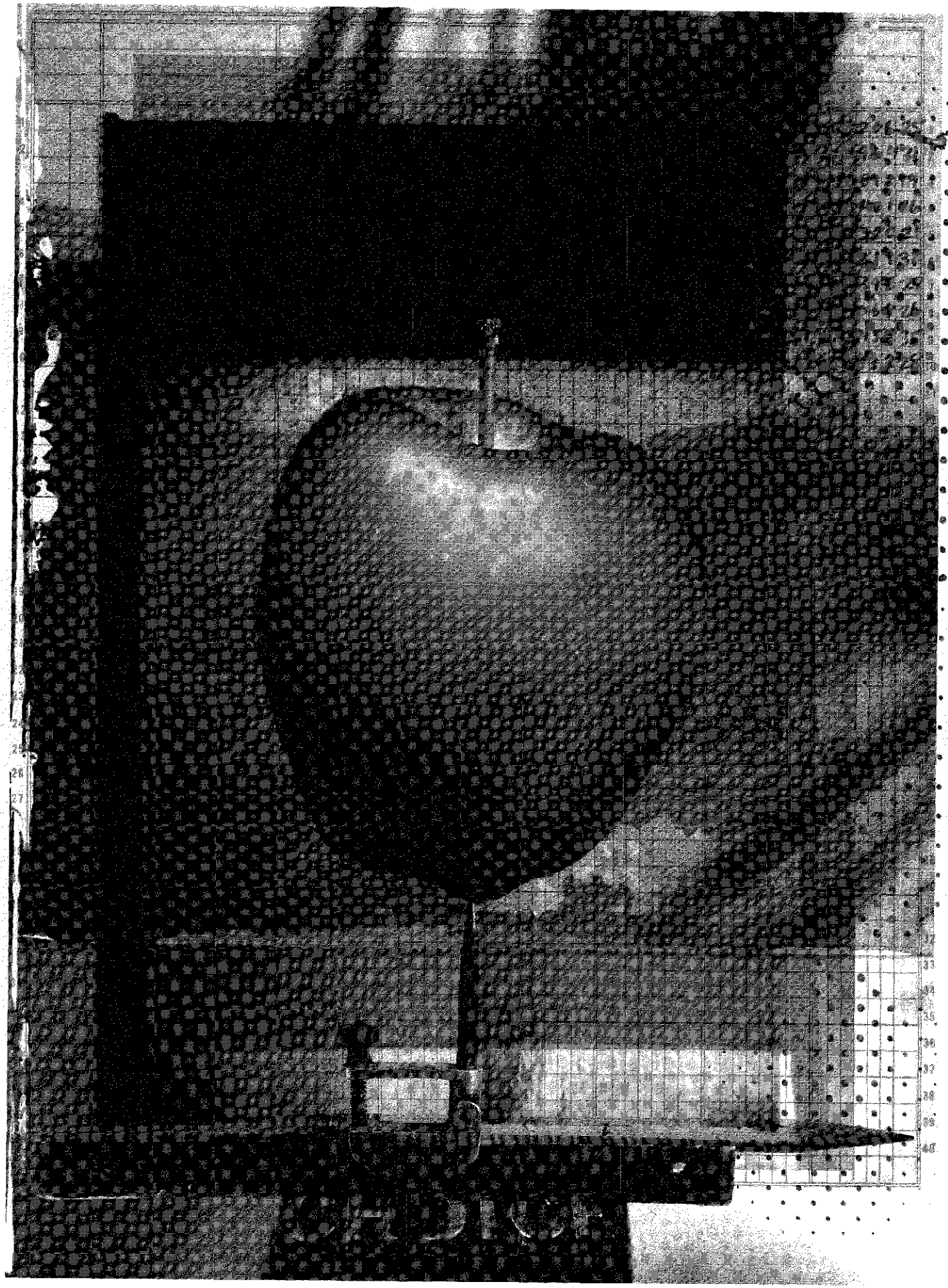
The American Board tackles the toughest issue of all, linking teacher performance to student performance, but this program is in its infancy. And short of market forces' operating in the K–12 realm, it is hard to imagine imposing this linkage—and its implications for pay and organization—on unwilling teacher unions. If past is prologue, they will fight it to the end. As the world's most famous union leader, Lech Walesa, reminded us, there is no command-control device available to bureaucracies to crack that whip: "We pretend to work and the state pretends to pay us."

In the final analysis, however, the teacher unions must grasp the nettle if they are to survive in recognizable form. If they fail to do so they will be abandoned by their more ambitious members and the public, which has, so far at least, supported them. Like the mythic Marxist state, they will wither away.

The notion of "board certification" establishes the principle that some teachers should be paid more than others.

–Denis P. Doyle is the cofounder and chief academic officer of SchoolNet Inc., a data-warehousing and decision-support service for schools. He is the author of Winning the Brain Race, *with former Xerox CEO David Kearns, and* Reinventing Education, *with former IBM CEO Lou Gerstner.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHY CHOICE IS GOOD FOR TEACHERS

Traditionalists and progressives coexist warily in today's public schools, creating fragmented institutions with no common ethos. Letting teachers start their own schools may bring an end to the pedagogical holy wars by DAVID J. FERRERO

THREE YEARS AGO I VISITED AN ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL IN NEW England. It is a terrific place—small, personalized, staffed by deeply committed teachers, and attended by students who seem to approach learning with enthusiasm. Nearly all of its graduates go on to college. Everyone affiliated with the school loves it. I wish more places like it existed across the country.

But I wouldn't want to teach there.

This school is avowedly progressive, with a project-based curriculum. Each student's course of study is completely individualized, developed with the help of a teacher advisor. Students spend half their academic week in internships outside the school building. The atmosphere of the school is therapeutic. While I have come to recognize the value of such schools for some students, parents, and teachers, I continue to subscribe to the ideal of a humanistic liberal arts education that is highly prescriptive and, while global in scope, grounded in the intellectual, aesthetic, and moral traditions of western civilization.

Such an education exposes students not only to what Matthew Arnold famously termed "the best that has been thought and said," but also develops in them a valuable form of critical consciousness that is difficult to acquire elsewhere in contemporary American society. I am the product of a humanistic education, and I am grateful to be the kind of person it has made me. It inspires my work as a citizen and parent. It also sparked my desire to become a teacher and informed what I did in the classroom. My life would be greatly impoverished without it.

My progressive colleagues are equally passionate about their commitments to education. And I am grateful for that, because students benefit from passionate edu-

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN WEBER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cators with a clear vision for schooling. We are all better off as allies working on behalf of children and a better society than we are as rivals slandering and sabotaging one another's work. This realization has led me to another: that our current system of common schooling makes alliances between progressives and traditionalists impossible.

Why Choice Is Good for Teachers

At a certain level, I have much in common with my progressive colleagues. We all want students to read well, think critically, and live happy, prosperous lives. Each of us has credible conceptions of democracy, freedom, and achievement. We all believe in civic education that urges students to contribute to the common good. And we agree that schools should be challenging, personalized, and staffed by committed teachers who inspire and motivate students. But our understandings of what those things actually require of schools differ profoundly. Our definitions of democratic freedom and how to achieve it derive from different intellectual and moral traditions, as do our beliefs about what's worth learning, what counts as achievement, and, most important, what kind of school is best for children and society.

The differences go deep. Pedagogical and curricular beliefs are extensions of more comprehensive philosophical or religious doctrines that are in turn colored by ideological ones. Educational doctrines reflect metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and sometimes spiritual commitments that powerfully shape one's identity and understanding of history and society. This is why—as any student of the history of American education knows—educators have never agreed on what knowledge should be taught or how best to teach it.

For example, if I believe that human societies are inherently amoral, unjust, and governed by powerful elites who rig the economic, political, and educational game in their favor, then I might endorse the late Brazilian social activist Paulo Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed," wherein students are taught to view social relations in terms of power and domination. I might train my charges in practices of "resistance" rather than making them memorize multiplication tables.

Imagine, however, that I believe that the liberal-republican nation-state represents an important advance (however imperfect) over previous types of regimes. Imagine that I also believe in the power of meritocracy, rather than inherited wealth or brute force, as a means to improve one's station in life. Then I might, like E. D. Hirsch Jr., a University of Virginia scholar and author of *Cultural Literacy*, view mastery of traditional academic subject matter as supremely important to society's least advantaged and to social progress in general. Both positions have the best interests of children sincerely in mind. Both have a reasonable conception of justice, democracy, and citizenship. But because the underlying philosophical and ideological bases differ fundamentally, each position interprets these mandates in ways that imply radically different kinds of schools.

Students at the Metropolitan Career and Technical Center (the "Met") in Providence pursue individual projects built around their interests, in an environment notably less formal than that found at Harlem's Frederick Douglass Academy. Despite these differences, both schools graduate students who are literate, competent citizens.

Given these profound disagreements, I have come to believe that educators would derive more satisfaction from an education system that gave them greater freedom to create schools according to their pedagogical principles, in recognition of the powerful influence that philosophical, ideological, and sometimes spiritual worldviews have over those principles. Such a system would entail allowing parents to choose the schools their children will attend, because the many different kinds of schools established under such an arrangement would correspond to the values and needs of educators, students, and parents. In short, a system of school choice would prove more satisfying for educators because it could foster the creation of cohesive learning communities based on common beliefs about teaching and learning.

Our current system of common schooling makes alliances betwee

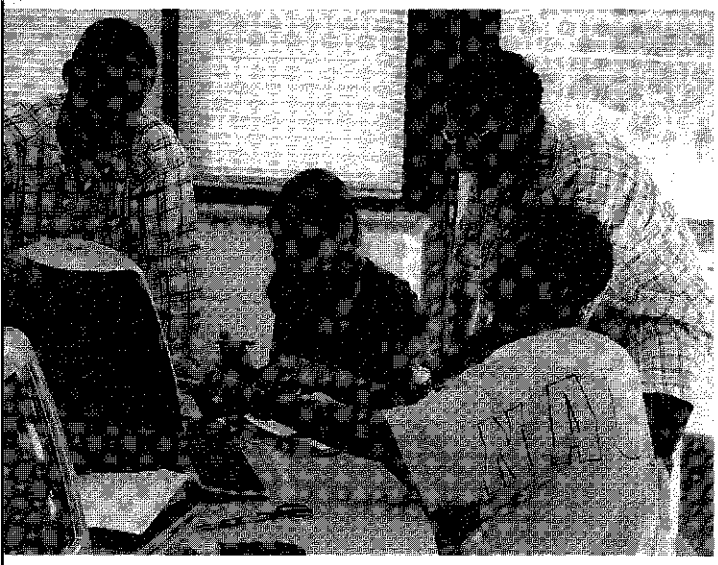
Many Ways to Be Good

Despite moving toward a greater appreciation for pluralism in other spheres of life, American educators and policymakers per-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sist in their attempts to impose a uniform doctrine of education on the entire institution of schooling. Consider the attempts to develop national or even state-level content standards. Or the efforts to establish a uniform canon of "best practices." Reformers of all stripes seem to want to create what educational historian David Tyack has termed "the one best system." Yet as Tyack's Stanford University colleague Larry Cuban has recently argued, there are many different ways for a school to be "good."

For instance, Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem, the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center ("the Met") in Providence, and the Oakland School for Social Justice and Community Development are all very different urban high schools that enroll mostly low-income black and Hispanic students. Students at Douglass wear uniforms and study a traditional college preparatory curriculum, whereas students at the Met pursue individual projects built around their interests in an environment notably less formal than found at Douglass. The School for Social Justice, meanwhile, comes closest to Freire's ideal. There students take courses in "culture and resistance" where they learn about "systems of oppression" and are taught to organize political action in their communities. Despite these differences, all three schools graduate students who are literate, competent citizens. And all three outperform nearby comprehensive high schools enrolling similar student populations. In short, students seem to thrive in a broad range of schools.



progressives and traditionalists impossible.

The reason is that beneath the doctrinal conflicts lies a set of characteristics that all good schools have in *common*. According to Cuban, "They have clear and shared purposes; they believe that all children can learn; each school staff has developed a working culture that embodies these common beliefs and enjoys collective action; and parents are deeply involved with the school. Thus very different concepts of schooling can be embraced without sacrificing the core purposes of public education."

Variations on Cuban's list of attributes are found widely in accounts of successful schools. At this level of analysis, educators enjoy notable consensus. Both Hirsch and Freire espouse Cuban's principles. Each created excellent schools that instantiated those principles in different ways. But try to make their respective disciples work together in the same school, and every one of those principles would be undermined.

Every zoned public school houses a jumble of competing educational doctrines. In a typical school, partisans coexist warily and resent each other's influence. The traditionalists lament the lack of rigor, the progressives complain about the amount of required curriculum coverage, and the Freireans scoff at the traditionalists' easy absorption of women authors and black inventors. Genuine collegiality grounded in a set of shared norms and standards of practice is nearly impossible under these conditions. One reason for the difficulty of comprehensive school reform is that any attempt to impose coherence inevitably generates resistance among a plurality of the faculty. To be sure, some resist out of sheer lassitude or intransigence. But others resist because they hold contrary beliefs about their vocation as educators.

To keep the peace, schools often resort to giving teachers as much latitude in their classroom practices as possible. Hence arises the oft-cited isolation of teachers and the difficulty of forming genuinely collegial school cultures. If educators instead could come together under the umbrella of a particular educational doctrine, one of the chief barriers to cohesive schools would evaporate. And the way to do this is to allow teachers (and parents and students) to form—within the bounds of liberal-republican and professional consensus—schools that reflect their own philosophical and pedagogical convictions.

This argument is admittedly speculative. However, consider a historical analogy: the process by which western societies first came to accept pluralism, however grudgingly, as a fact of life, and eventually to regard tolerance as a cherished public value. Before the 17th century, the notion that political authority and social order could exist without an established church was unthinkable. Clearly, secular authority required divine sanction. It took the Protestant Reformation and more than a century of bloody, destructive conflict to convince people that this belief had become a source of political and social *dis*order. Religious tolerance emerged as a pragmatic attempt to stop people from killing one another over matters of doctrine and faith. Only later did philosophers begin to theorize tolerance as a positive good in its own right. Over time, most religious sects thrived as voluntary associations, and they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eventually came to recognize their common aims and interests. Catholics and Protestants, Anglicans and Baptists—not to mention Buddhists and Muslims—now coexist amicably in a way unimaginable to their 17th-century ancestors. And all but the most extreme sects contribute to, rather than threaten, the common civic culture.

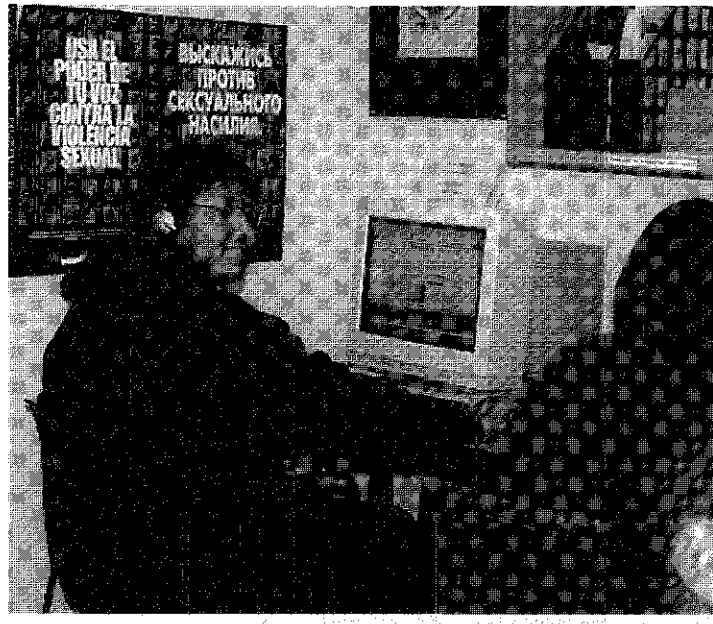
The analogy isn't perfect. But it at least suggests that we may have less to fear from school choice than from the continual struggle to establish one educational "faith" through the vehicle of the common school. Sectarian warfare among Christians obscured much that competing groups held in *common* as Christians. The untangling of church and state paved the way for interfaith cooperation among religious sects. Similarly, giving educators more freedom to practice their sectarian creeds could heal doctrinal rifts and enable greater professional solidarity. It could also prove energizing. Religious sects thrived once their proselytizing energies were set free. The same could happen to teachers. After all, who in contemporary secular society feels the proselytizing impulse more strongly than educators?

Enhancing Professionalism

For the better part of the past century, educators have sought to be recognized as professionals. The idea that the education system, and the nation, ought to embrace many different pedagogical approaches may seem to undermine this aspiration, since this effort has rested, at least in part, on the assertion that educators and educational researchers possess a scientific knowledge base and expertise that distinguishes them from laypersons. But, as Cuban suggests, accepting many different manifestations of teaching as "good" does not mean denying any empirical basis for what constitutes sound teaching. What educators need is a conception of teaching that lies somewhere between the medical model espoused by advocates of professionalism and the belief that anyone with a bachelor's degree and no criminal record is qualified to teach. Craft trades and ministries point toward a middle way that, though less prestigious than medicine, could actually enhance the profession by better reflecting the work teachers do instead of arrogating to itself a status that strikes many noneducators as presumptuous and self-serving.

School choice actually has the potential to enhance professionalism and collegiality among teachers by allowing them to form communities of practice around some core conception of the pedagogical good. At the school level, enabling educators to establish their own schools of choice would make it possible for them to agree on principles, practices, and strategies for improvement. Choice likewise provides a substantive basis for parental and student buy-in. All would belong to a school with a shared sense of mission, organized according to a common set of values. Right away, two key features of strong schools—quality teachers and engaged students and parents—can more easily gain a foothold.

At the community level, support for schools might also be enhanced under a regime of public school choice, because fewer people would feel compromised, silenced, or alienated in



The Oakland School for Social Justice and Community Development comes closest to Paulo Freire's ideal. There students take courses in "culture and resistance" where they learn about "systems of oppression" and are taught to organize political action in their communities.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF OAKLAND SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

an environment where well-intentioned school officials are forced to accommodate conflicting constituent demands and wind up doing so in ways that favor the most vocal, affluent, or well-organized. Choice alone would not be enough. Localities would also need to cultivate a spirit of tolerance so that certain kinds of schools were not prevented from opening because of local majority bias. Majority rule has the potential to shift the current acrimony to slightly different terrain while continuing to hold children and their families hostage to doctrinal zeal.

More than Just Market Forces

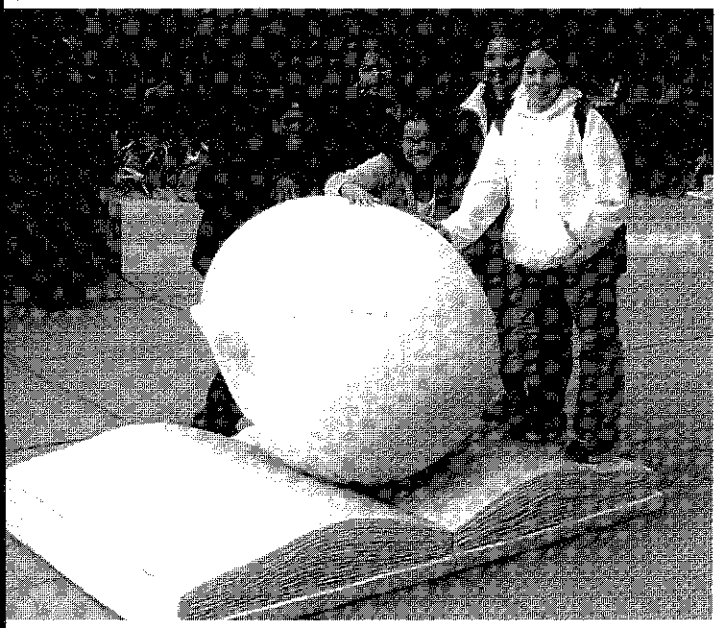
Note that my argument for choice has not relied on the virtues of markets or the rights of parents. Though in effect schools would compete with one another and parents and students would have more freedom to choose among schools, there is at least one important difference. The difference lies in the conceptualization of schooling itself. While the market and parental-rights models tend to conceive schooling as a service commodity, with educators as "providers" and families (and businesses) as "clients" or "consumers," the model sketched here

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

follows James Davison Hunter, author of *The Death of Character,* and Robert J. Nash, author of *Answering the Virtuecrats,* in conceiving of schools as moral communities.

In this framework, the philosophical, ideological, or spiritual outlooks that drive a person to establish or attend a certain kind of school are not chosen in the same way that one chooses a dentist or soft drink, but reflect his or her identity and conception of what kind of life is most worth living. It conceives schooling as an institution more like a church, a profession, or a branch of the military, where one can choose to join or leave, but the choices reflect deeper convictions rather than mere consumer preferences.

This way of understanding schooling and choice also makes it possible for schools to exercise normative authority—to impose standards and expectations—in guiding children's development. As with churches, the professions, and the military, students are socialized into a culture and are expected to master its standards of excellence and ethics. It is not that the market and parents' rights models preclude this understanding of what a school is and does; it is just that they provide little conceptual basis on which schools can assert normative authority or make legitimate demands on students, parents, or other constituents. After all, there are no consumer obligations, only consumer rights.



This talk of schools as moral communities exercising "normative authority," taken to its logical extreme, can sound scary, conjuring images of publicly supported KKK schools, madrasas, and militant ethnonationalist or fundamentalist schools. But I think this fear underestimates the strength of the political and professional consensus we do enjoy. In addition to the common values identified by Cuban, most conscientious American educators and citizens share certain aims, values, and standards of practice that, while they allow for a wide range of conflicting interpretations, nonetheless set limits on what kinds of schools could be authorized to receive public funding. What reasonable American does not believe that students should be taught to read, write, and use their minds well? That they should acquire virtues of justice, tolerance, patriotism, and cooperation with people different from themselves? That they should develop competence as citizens of a liberal-republican polity? Though educators and the public will never agree on precisely what "citizen competence" demands of schooling, the best strategies for teaching reading, or the most appropriate curriculum for cultivating critical thinking or a sense of justice, most will agree that schools that teach or practice racism, deny boys and girls equal opportunities, or neglect mathematics do not merit public support.

Of course, many difficult issues would require political deliberation to resolve. For instance, academic and civic standards would still need to be established. (Should we permit schools that teach creationism or Afrocentrism?) "Reasonable pluralism" would have to be defined. (Is it reasonable for a school's dress code to require girls to wear chadors?) Assessment systems would need to be devised that preserved rigor without favoring some kinds of schools over others. Public information and transportation systems would need to be established. Regulations and incentives would need to ensure that *all* families had full access to high-quality schools. Decisions would have to be made regarding whether schools could form with the implicit (or express) purpose of appealing primarily to a single ethnic or religious group. Labor and certification issues would need to be addressed, new organizational networks formed, new ways of delivering electives, sports, and extracurricular activities developed. And so on.

These and many other problems of principle and practice would remain to be solved. But if designed correctly, a system of choice that honored the convictions of educators (and other constituents) would take many of the most intractable issues off the table, especially those that touch us most closely—disagreement over curriculum, pedagogy, and standards of personal comportment. The liberal arts school could coexist with the project-based school, the JROTC academy with the school for peace and social justice, the school that requires uniforms with the one that lets students collectively determine the dress code from year to year. Once all sects feel secure in the practice of their faith, could a profession-wide esprit de corps be far behind? Could Hirscheans, Freireans, and other sectarians stop fighting one another and learn to fight together on behalf of schools and children? We won't know until we call a truce in the pedagogical holy wars.

–David J. Ferrero, a former public school teacher, is the director of evaluation and policy research at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Other nations elicit better performance from their students through the use of high-stakes graduation exams. Along these same lines, Michigan now links college scholarships to high-school test results

Money and Motivation

by JOHN H. BISHOP

ILLUSTRATION BY GETTY IMAGES

WHY DON'T AMERICAN HIGH-school students perform as well as their peers in other industrialized nations? One reason is that they devote less time and intellectual energy to their schooling. Learning takes work, and that work is generally not going to be as much fun as hanging out with friends or playing Grand Theft Auto. The question is how to pull them away from such distractions in favor of studying longer and harder. The strategy followed by nations throughout East Asia and much of Europe has been to base admission to specific universities and academic programs (such as law and medicine) largely on students' performance on a battery of subject-specific examinations devised by a nation's ministry of education. These high-stakes exams are very different from the multiple-choice aptitude tests—the SAT-1 and the ACT—that serve a similar function here. Each subject exam is three hours or more, and students write essays or solve multistep problems, showing their work. My analysis of data from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (see "A Steeper, Better Road to Graduation," *Feature*, Winter 2001) demonstrates that students in countries with such high-stakes exit exams outperform students in other, equally developed countries by 1.3 grade levels in science and 1.0 grade level in math.

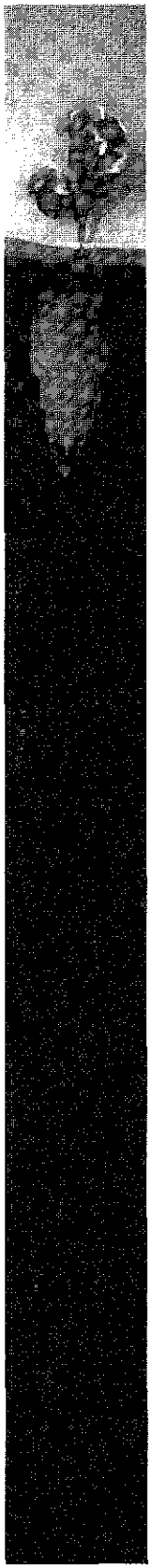
The idea of a government-sponsored exam limiting access to postsecondary education has never been popular in America, the land of second chances. In fact, the American higher education system's open-door admissions policies are a major strength of the U.S. economy, enabling adults of any age, whatever their background or mistakes in life, to return to school and gain new skills. Nevertheless, the problem of how to motivate students remains. The strategy in 17 states, such as Florida, Texas, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Jersey, is to require students to pass a minimum-competency exam in order to graduate from high school. These are tests of basic skills, and the passing scores are typically set so low that the possibility of failing the tests does not motivate most students to try harder. New York State and North Carolina, by contrast, give students an incentive to study through the use of rigorous end-of-course exams that signal medium and high achievement levels, not just meeting minimum standards. The results of New York's famed Regents exams are reported on students' high-school transcripts, and students earn special Regents diplomas if they pass enough of the tests. Colleges consider the Regents diploma a mark of significant achievement, making it worth students' while to learn the tested subjects. The Regents exams give students a lofty goal to aspire to, rather than a low hurdle to jump over.

The state of Michigan rejected the use of minimum-competency exams, largely because it wanted the state's high-school test to reflect more challenging learning goals. Michigan policymakers also did not want to take the risk that a high-stakes exam would lower the rates of high-school graduation and college attendance. Instead, similar to New York and North Carolina, the state took the modest step of reporting students' scores on their high-school transcripts.

When Michigan's high-school exam was a no-stakes test, students had no reason to try their best on the primary indicator of performance in the state's high-school accountability system.



In 1999, Michigan increased the reward for good academic performance by offering the Michigan Merit Award, a one-year $2,500 scholarship for any student who scores at Level I or Level 2 on the Michigan Educational Achievement Program (MEAP) tests in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. Students take these tests for the first time in the spring of their junior year. They can also earn the scholarship by meeting the standards in two subjects and scoring in the 75th percentile or higher on the SAT or the ACT. Students who attend college in Michigan are eligible for the full $2,500 scholarship, while students going to college out of state can receive up to $1,000. Starting with the class of 2005, students can be awarded up to $500 more if they meet or exceed state standards on two of the four MEAP exams in 7th and 8th grade as well. College financial aid officers are prohibited from taking the merit award into account when they make need-based awards, meaning that students who earned the scholarship would not have their need-based grant aid reduced, as is common. A number of other states also have merit-based scholarship programs that are open to all students, but the awards are typically less generous and are based not on tests developed by the states, but on grades or college-admissions test scores.

Scholarship programs like Michigan's carry a low cost-benefit ratio. The total expense for the Michigan Merit Award comes to less than 1 percent of the state's K–12 education spending, yet the program has the potential to realign incentives within the school system in a way that serves the interests of students, parents, educators, and the community. It encourages students to study harder; enhances their opportunity and willingness to go on to college; improves the learning climate in most schools; and strengthens the energy for reform among parents and teachers. What makes the Michigan program so powerful is that the scholarships are based on students' performance on an external exam that reflects the state's recommended curriculum. If the awards were based instead on, say, high-school grades, many students would respond by choosing easy courses where an A is guaranteed. Teachers would face little incentive to set higher standards; in fact, the pressure to inflate grades would intensify. If the awards were based primarily on SAT or ACT scores, the main result would be an increase in Kaplan's revenues from test-prep courses. The only way to win the award is to learn the curriculum well enough to pass the state's high-school test. Unless the curriculum is misguided, this focuses everyone in the system on the main goal of K–12 education.

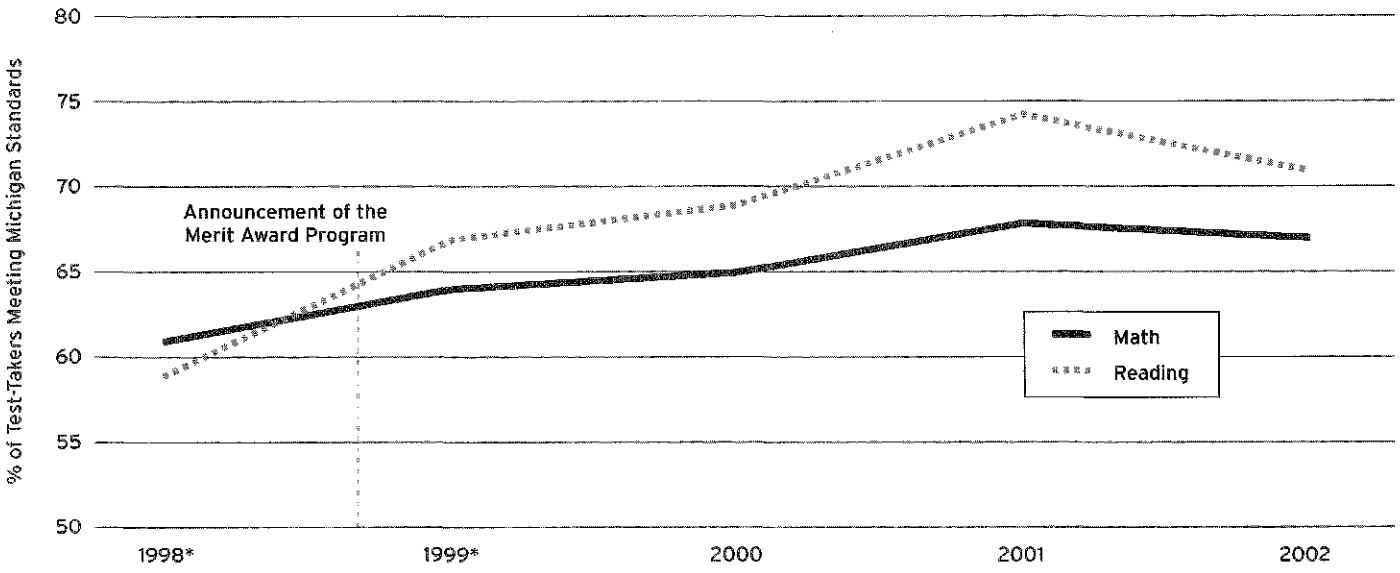
Unvarnished Benefits

Before the advent of the scholarship program, students and parents in Michigan saw few short-term, tangible benefits when school districts opted for higher standards, more qualified teachers, or a heavier workload for students. The immediate consequences of such

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Making the Grade (Figure 1)

The percentage of students meeting state standards on the Michigan Educational Achievement Program (MEAP) tests in reading and math increased significantly after the creation of the Michigan Merit Award even though the percentage of students taking the exam also rose.



*1998 and 1999 results are for juniors who took the test in the spring of that year. 2000, 2001, and 2002 results are for the graduating classes of those years, regardless of when students took the test.

SOURCE: Michigan Department of the Treasury

decisions—higher taxes, more homework, lower grade point averages (GPAs), a greater risk of being denied a diploma—were negative. As a result, parents pressured teachers to be easy graders and taxpayers were reluctant to pay them well enough to recruit highly qualified personnel. The Michigan Merit Award makes everyone stronger advocates of higher standards and better teaching.

The fact that the scholarships go to *every* student who meets or exceeds the absolute standard also enhances the classroom environment. Competitive merit scholarships have the dysfunctional effect of pitting classmates against one another. The winners of these traditional merit scholarships are seen as nerds, suck ups, or "Oreos" by their classmates. That is why many schools stopped awarding these honors at school assemblies. There were too many incidents of catcalls mixed with unenthusiastic applause. The merit award helps to reduce peer pressure against students who perform well academically. Students who joke around in class will no longer be honored and rewarded by their peers because their disruptions make it harder for the rest of the class to get the $2,500 award. The fact that the cut score for the merit award was set at a level that is achievable by almost all students makes everyone believe that it is an attainable goal, one worth striving for.

The merit award program enhances the state's ability to hold schools accountable for student achievement. When the MEAP high-school exam was a no-stakes test, students had no reason to try their best on the primary indicator of performance in the state's high-school accountability system. Many students were boy-

The energy that students devote to cracking the SAT-1 **would be better spent reading widely and learning to think scientifically.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cotting the test. School ratings thus reflected, in part, a school's success in getting students to put in some effort on the tests. This reduced the validity of high-school tests as measures of student achievement. If the state had turned the MEAP into a high-stakes exam by making high-school graduation contingent on passing it, this would have affected only those students at the bottom of the achievement curve. The merit award has given students across the board an incentive to do the best they can on the high-school test, thus improving the fairness, validity, and effectiveness of the state's school accountability system.

Increasing the stakes attached to the MEAP assessment also improved the academic environment by focusing the efforts of teachers and students on a good test. In fact, the MEAP is a much better exam than the tests that most teachers develop for themselves and use to grade their students. It is the product of an extensive consultative process, for which input was obtained from hundreds of well-regarded teachers. All test questions are pretested and reviewed for ambiguity and bias by trained testing professionals. By contrast, studies of tests developed by teachers have found that the overwhelming majority of the questions were created to tap the lowest of Bloom's taxonomic categories: knowledge of terms, facts, or principles. A 1987 study found that less than 20 percent of the questions developed by secondary-school history teachers required the integration of ideas. College instructors required such integration in 99 percent of their test items. Most secondary-school teachers test for low-level competencies because that is what they teach. The MEAP high-school test pushes things in the other direction.

Students who blow off high school pay a very high price, much larger than they imagine when they are in school.

One final benefit of the merit award program is that it tends to redirect students away from preparing for high-stakes multiple-choice tests like the SAT-1 and the ACT. This is a good thing because the ACT and the SAT-1 are not comprehensive measures of a well-rounded secondary education. Both of these admissions tests fail to assess most of the material—economics, civics, literature, foreign languages, and the ability to write an essay—that high-school students are expected to learn. The energy that students devote to cracking the SAT-1 and the ACT would be better spent reading widely and learning to write coherently, to think scientifically, to analyze and appreciate great literature, and to converse in a foreign language. The MEAP tests have been developed with great care and are far superior to the ACT, yet, despite the existence of the scholarship program, the ACT continues to carry much higher stakes for Michigan students because it is the primary admissions test used by Michigan's colleges.

Evidence from Canada and Michigan

Michigan's scholarship program is still young. Therefore, we must look elsewhere for evidence of its likely long-term effects on student performance. Analyses of high-stakes exam systems around the world have demonstrated that they lead to significant achievement gains, but these are not comparable to the moderate-stakes system in Michigan. Canada affords a more relevant example. In the early 1990s, the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Newfoundland, Quebec, and Francophone New Brunswick administered curriculum-based examinations in English during students' junior year of high school and in French, mathematics, biology, chemistry, and physics during their senior year. Students' performance on the exams accounted for 40 to 50 percent of their final grade. This was only a moderate stake because college-admissions decisions were based almost entirely on high-school grades and were generally made before the senior-year exams were graded. Nevertheless, studies have found that, after controlling for the size and structure of the school and the social background of its students, schools in provinces with external exams taught their students a statistically significant one-half of a U.S. grade-level equivalent more math and science by 8th grade than comparable schools in provinces that did not give curriculum-based external tests.

Schools in provinces that used external exams were also more likely to have teachers who specialized in teaching one subject in middle school and to hire teachers who majored in the subject they will teach. Schools in these provinces devoted more hours to math and science instruction and built and equipped better science labs; their students were more likely to do experiments

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

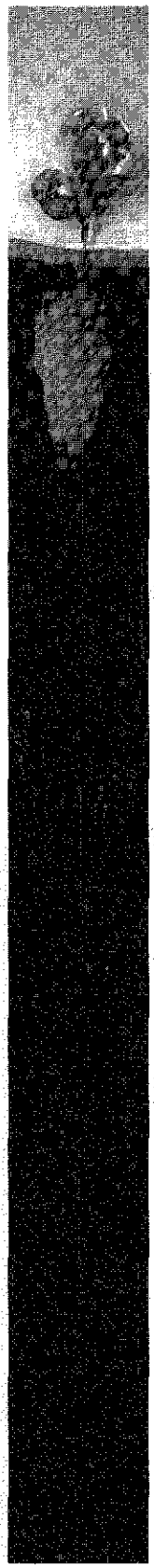
in science class and to agree with the statement that science is useful in everyday life. Students also talked with their parents more often about schoolwork and reported that their parents had more positive attitudes about the subject. The success of these exams led other provinces—Manitoba and Anglophone New Brunswick—to introduce curriculum-based external exit exams in the late 1990s.

Can we expect similar effects in Michigan? The early signs are promising. Before the introduction of the merit award, just 75 percent of public high-school juniors were taking the MEAP tests. When Michigan's scholarship program became effective for high-school juniors who took the state tests in the spring of 1999, participation immediately jumped by 10 percentage points. Participation rates continued to climb thereafter, reaching 99.7 percent of seniors in the class of 2002.

More important is the substantial increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding Michigan's education standards. Test scores usually decrease as participation improves, yet in math the proportion of test-takers meeting the standard rose from 61 percent in the spring of 1998 to 67 percent for the class of 2002. In reading, the proportion increased from 59 percent in 1998 to 71 percent for the class of 2002 (see Figure 1). Similar improvements were seen in writing and science. The proportion of the graduating class passing all four MEAP tests and winning a merit award increased by 7 percent from 2000 to 2002. Forty-six percent of the public and private school students who took all four tests got a merit award in 2000.

Michigan students have also improved their standing on other tests. Average scores on the ACT test were constant among Michigan students, while the nation's average score declined by 0.2 points. On the SAT-1, Michigan's scores on the combined verbal and mathematics tests rose 5 points more rapidly than for the rest of the nation.

There is also good news about Michigan's high-school graduation rate. Nationally, graduation rates fell slightly during the 1990s; the ratio of the number of regular diplomas awarded to the number of 10th graders enrolled three years earlier declined from 77 percent in 1991 to 76 percent in 2001. By contrast, Michigan's regular diploma to 10th-grade enrollment ratio rose from 78 percent in 1991 to 83 percent in 2001. Unlike Ohio and Indiana, its neighbors to the south, Michigan did not implement a high-school graduation test. This decision has apparently paid off. Indiana's diploma to 10th-grade enrollment ratio declined from 78 percent in the five-year period before implementation of the graduation test in 2000 to 77 percent in 2001.



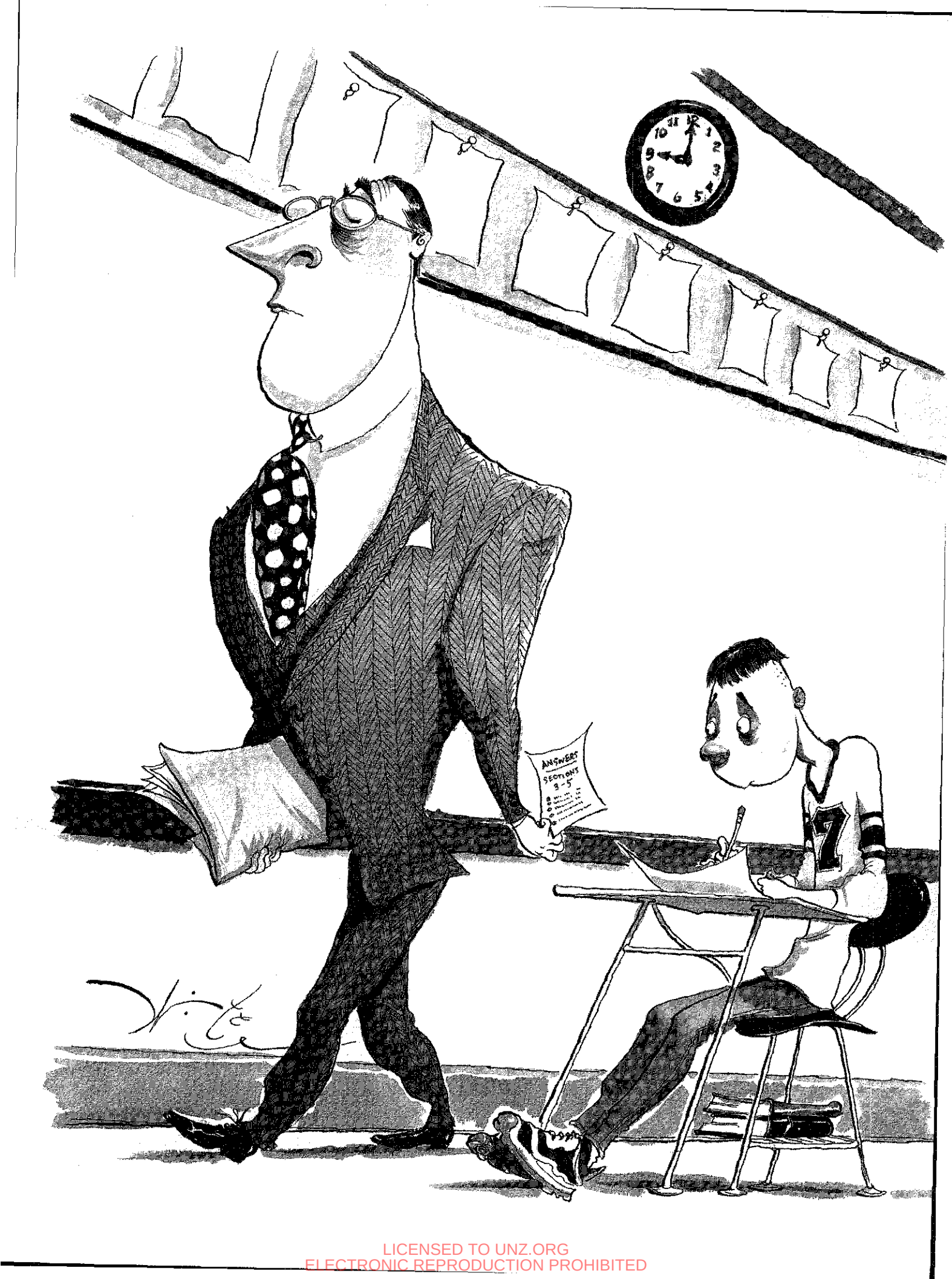
Since Michigan's scholarship program enhances a student's ability to attend college, one might expect that it would also increase college-attendance rates. This is what happened in Georgia, particularly at colleges in the state, after the creation of the Hope scholarship program. However, the Hope scholarship is considerably more generous than Michigan's award. The Hope scholarship lasts four years (if you maintain at least a 3.0 GPA), while the merit award is good for only one year. The Hope scholarship also pays full tuition at Georgia public universities and community colleges and a similar amount at private colleges in Georgia. Michigan's $2,500 award covers only about half of average tuition and fees at Michigan's public four-year colleges. Consequently, one would expect a smaller response to the Michigan Merit Award than to the Hope scholarship. In any case, the data necessary to determine conclusively whether the merit award influenced college attendance are not yet available.

States that desire to focus students' attentions would be wise to consider merit-based scholarship programs **like those in use in Georgia and Michigan.**

Students who blow off high school pay a very high price, much larger than they imagine when they are in school. They believe they will be able to attend college despite low grades and low achievement. But in fact their chances of completing a degree program are almost zero. They are also unaware that applying themselves in high school helps them get jobs that offer training and promotion opportunities and eventually higher wage rates. States that desire to focus students' attentions would be wise to consider merit-based scholarship programs like those in use in Georgia and Michigan. They offer little in the way of downside risk, and they have the potential for wide-ranging benefits.

–John H. Bishop is a professor of human resource studies at Cornell University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The pressures of accountability may encourage school personnel to doctor the results from high-stakes tests. Here's how to stop them

To Catch a Cheat

THE COSTANO SCHOOL IN EAST PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA, ACHIEVED national recognition in 2000 for overcoming enormous obstacles to achieve academic success. Its principal, Marthelia Hargrove, was designated Principal of the Year by the National Alliance of Black School Educators, and the school was identified by the nonprofit Education Trust as one of the relatively few high-poverty, high-minority schools nationwide that perform well on state exams.

Just two years later, however, the school's performance came under question when 11 former students, interviewed by the *San Jose Mercury News*, acknowledged that they had received inappropriate help from teachers on state tests. A former Costano teacher told the paper that a school administrator had encouraged him to cheat on the exams, and a subsequent examination of the students' actual answer sheets revealed an unusually high number of erasure marks where answers had been changed from wrong to right.

Costano does not appear to be an isolated case. Similar incidents have been documented in Indiana, Maryland, New York, Texas, and Virginia, to name just a few. These scandals have aroused public concern, but there has been little hard evidence on the extent of cheating by school personnel on the type of tests required by recently enacted accountability legislation. Our research on cheating in Chicago indicates that the problem is significant enough to require attention, but not so widespread as to call into question the integrity of the nation's educators. A statistical technique that identifies cases of potential cheating within Chicago's public schools (described in detail below) indicates that, on any given exam, only 3 to 6 percent of classrooms experience instances

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

by BRIAN A. JACOB & STEVEN D. LEVITT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of teachers or administrators' doctoring students' exams.

Still, with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, the incentives for teachers and administrators to manipulate the results from high-stakes tests will only grow, especially as schools begin to feel the consequences of low scores. No matter what the outcome, cheating hurts the cause of school improvement. When they are not caught, school personnel who cheat may avoid accountability and thereby also cheat their students and the public. When they are caught, these school personnel produce scandals that drain energy and resources from the real business of schools and reform. With better detection methods, like the technique described here, schools can both investigate potential abuses of the system and deter cheating in the future, both of which will increase confidence in the results from high-stakes tests.

This article describes the results of a three-year investigation into cheating by school personnel. The goals of this research were to measure the prevalence of cheating by teachers and administrators and to analyze the factors that predict cheating. Strategies for cheating can include altering students' answer sheets, giving students the answers, or obtaining copies of an exam before the test date and literally "teaching the test"—prepping students with answers to actual test questions. Using data on test scores and student records from the Chicago Public Schools, we developed a statistical algorithm to identify classrooms where cheating was suspected. This method depends on two hallmarks of potential cheating: unexpected fluctuations in students' test scores and unusual patterns of answers for students within a classroom. At the invitation of Arne Duncan, chief education officer of the Chicago Public Schools, we were given the opportunity to work with Chicago administrators to design and implement auditing and retesting procedures in 2002. The results of this retesting provided strong support for the effectiveness of our method for detecting cheating. Finally, we examined whether cheating responds to incentives, notably the introduction of a high-stakes testing regime in 1996.

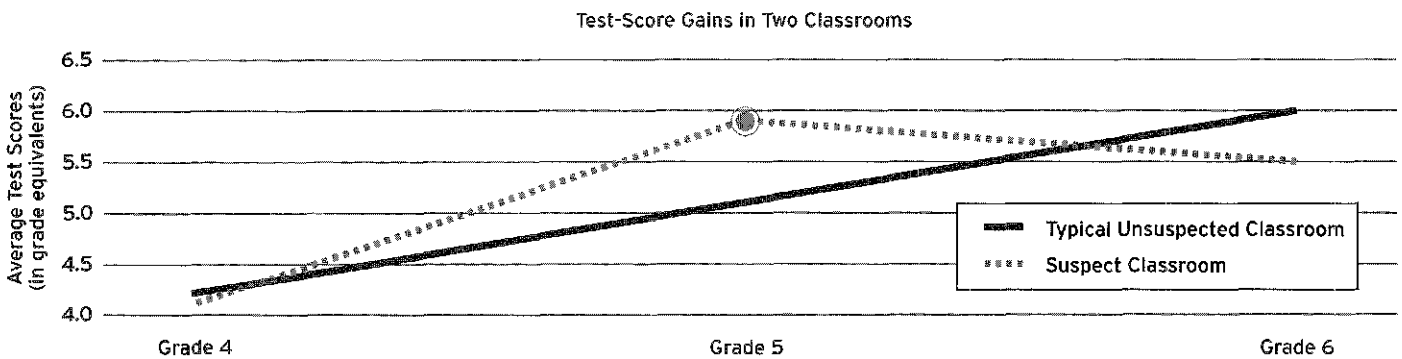
Testing Procedures

Each year, Chicago students in grades 3 through 8 are required to take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), a national norm-referenced exam with a reading comprehension section and three separate math sections, for a total of four subtests. The sample used in our analysis included all students in grades 3–7 for the years 1993–2000. (We excluded 8th graders because our statistical method requires scores for the following year.) Our data included each student's answers on each year's test; which school and classroom each student was in; each student's previous and future test scores; and demographic variables including each student's age, sex, race, and eligibility for the federal school lunch program, a widely used proxy for family income. The data also included a wide range of school-level characteristics. However, the data did not allow us to directly link teachers to classrooms or to track a particular teacher over time. Our final data set contained roughly 20,000 students per grade per year, distributed across approximately 1,000 classrooms, for a total of more than 40,000 "classroom years" of data (with four subject tests per classroom year) and more than 700,000 "student year" observations.

The ITBS is administered over a week-long period in early May. Only 3rd-grade teachers are permitted to give the exam

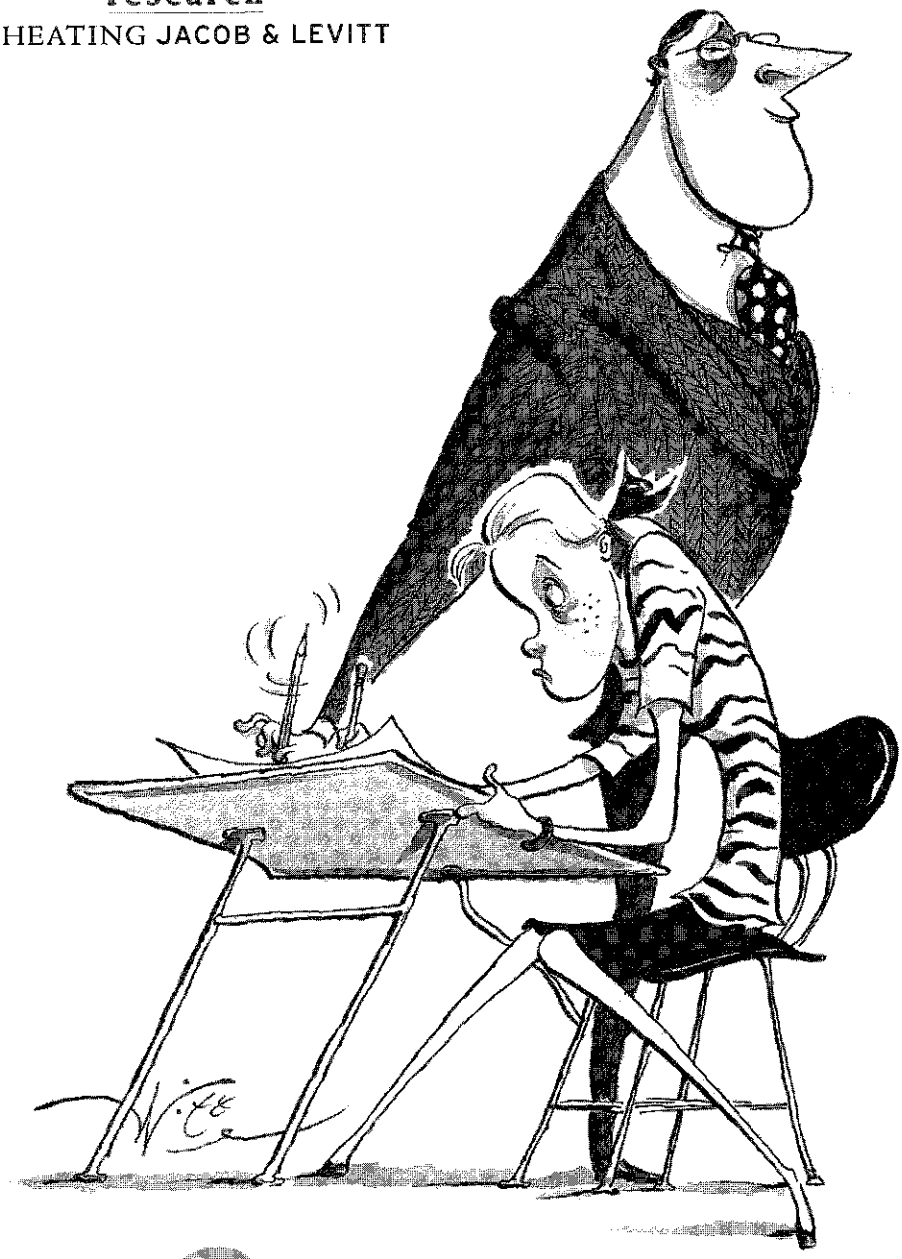
Suspicious Trend (Figure 1)

In a typical classroom, students' average performance tends to increase by one "grade equivalent" per year. A classroom where cheating may have occurred, by contrast, tends to experience a gain of greater than one grade equivalent, followed the next year by a decline. In the example below, illustrating the trends in two actual Chicago classrooms, the increase in scores from grade 4 to grade 5 with a drop in grade 6 signals a classroom where cheating may be going on.



SOURCE: Authors

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



to their own students; in other grades, teachers generally switch classrooms to proctor the exam. The exams are delivered to the schools one to two weeks before testing and are supposed to be kept in a secure location by the principal or the school's designated test coordinator, usually an administrator or counselor. Each section of the exam consists of 30 to 60 multiple-choice questions; students are given between 30 and 75 minutes to complete a section. Students mark their responses on answer sheets, which are scanned electronically to determine the student's score. There is no penalty for guessing.

Once time is up, teachers or administrators collect the exams and then "clean" the answer keys by erasing stray pencil marks, removing dirt or debris from the form, and darkening answers that were marked faintly by students. At the end of the testing week, the testing coordinators at each school deliver the completed answer keys and exams to the Chicago district's central office. School personnel are not supposed to keep copies of the actual exams, but school officials acknowledge that a number of teachers do so each year.

Identifying Cheating by School Personnel

Cheating by teachers and administrators, especially in extreme cases, is likely to leave tell-tale signs. Consider the results from two actual classrooms taking the same test, one of which we suspect of cheating. Figure 1 presents the students' average scores for the preceding, current, and following years, expressed in "grade equivalents." The ITBS is normed in such a way that the average 6th grader, for instance, taking the test during the eighth month of the school year, would score 6.8. A typical student would be expected to gain one grade equivalent for each year of school.

Students in the cheating classroom experienced relatively large increases in test scores from the previous to the current year (1.7 grade equivalents on average). The following year, however, their scores actually *declined*. By comparison, students in the typical classroom gained roughly one grade equivalent each year, as expected. The pattern of an unexpectedly large increase and then a decline in test scores fits the profile of a classroom where cheating is going on. Increases in test scores that are the result of cheating do not represent genuine gains in knowledge. Thus there is no reason to expect unusually large

On any given exam, school personnel appear to cheat in only 3 to 6 percent of classrooms.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The No Child Left Behind Act will only increase the incentives for teachers and administrators to manipulate the results from high-stakes tests.

increases to be sustained on future exams taken by these students—unless, of course, next year's teachers also cheat. In the absence of such collusive behavior, large gains due to cheating should be followed by unusually small gains or even declines for these students the next year. If sizable increases in test scores were due to an especially talented teacher, the gains would be likely to have a greater permanent component, even if students regressed a bit the following year.

We developed a measure of how unusual the fluctuations in test scores are by ranking each classroom's average test-score gains against all other classrooms in that same subject, grade, and year. Classrooms with relatively big gains on this year's test and relatively small gains on next year's test will score high on this indicator. Since students in the same classroom typically disperse into different classrooms the following year, we used the composition of the current year's classrooms as our basis of analysis.

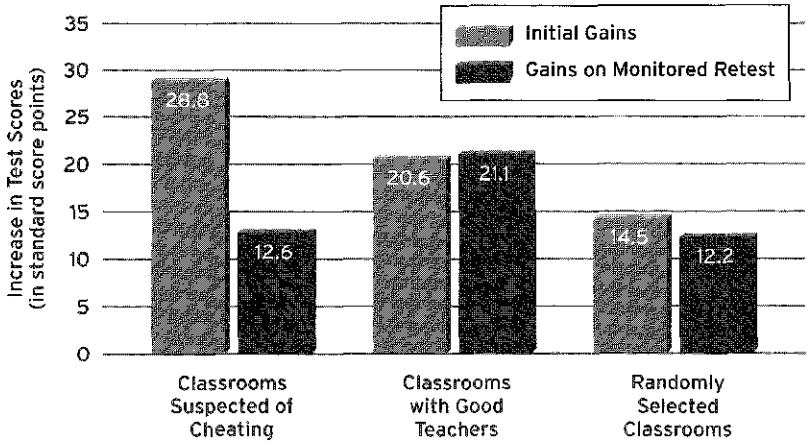
However, mere fluctuations in test scores are not enough to justify an investigation into potential cheating. Evidence that students' answers may have been influenced by school personnel in an unethical manner is also necessary. For instance, the easiest way for a teacher to cheat is to alter the same block of consecutive questions for a substantial portion of students in the class. In the classroom in Figure 1 with unusual test-score patterns, an examination of students' exams revealed that a large block of students provided identical answers on consecutive questions in the middle of the test, while no such pattern was found in the other classroom. More sophisticated cheating might involve skipping some questions so as to avoid a large block of identical answers or altering different blocks of questions for different students. We detected these and other potential strategies for cheating by combining four different measures of how suspicious a classroom's answer strings appear (see the web version of this article at www.educationnext.org for details). The essence of each measure is to predict whether individual students would answer each question correctly based on their past and future performance and to use these predictions to identify unexpected answer patterns.

These two indicators of cheating—unusually large increases followed by small gains or even declines in test scores the next year and unexpected patterns in students' answers—form the basis of our method for detecting evidence of suspected cheating. Among classrooms that are extremely unlikely to have cheated (classrooms with low values on both cheating indicators), there is only a slight positive relationship between unusual test scores and suspicious answer strings. By contrast, among classrooms with highly suspicious answer strings, the probability of large fluctuations

In Classrooms Suspected of Cheating, Scores Fall on Monitored Retest (Figure 2)

When classrooms suspected of cheating were retested under monitored conditions, their average gains on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills reading exam dropped by more than half. Classrooms that had experienced equally large gains but were not suspected of cheating made similar gains the second time around, a sign of good teaching. Randomly selected classrooms that were retested maintained almost all their gains.

Comparison of Results for Initial Test and Monitored Retest*



*** Gains on Iowa Test of Basic Skills between Spring 2001 and Spring 2002.**

SOURCE: Authors

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in test scores increases dramatically. To estimate the prevalence of cheating, we simply take the difference between the number of classrooms with highly suspicious answer strings that one would predict to have had large test-score fluctuations (assuming that they hadn't cheated) and the actual number of classrooms with highly suspicious answer strings and large test-score fluctuations. Intuitively, this measures the number of "extra" classrooms we find with large test-score fluctuations among the set of classrooms with highly suspicious answer strings.

Our analysis estimated that the share of classrooms where cheating occurred on any particular subject test ranged from 1.1 percent to 2.1 percent, depending on where the statistical cutoff point was set. For instance, the higher estimate has a cutoff at the 80th percentile, meaning that to be suspected of cheating, a classroom would need to experience gains better than 80 percent of all classrooms, and its pattern of answers would need to appear more suspicious than 80 percent of all classrooms. The same is true for the lower estimate, which requires that classrooms be above the 95th percentile on both indicators.

If every classroom that cheated did so on only one subject test, then the overall prevalence of cheating on the ITBS would simply be four times its prevalence on any particular subject test. In many instances, however, classrooms appeared to cheat on multiple subjects. Thus our method estimated that cheating occurred on at least one subject test in 3.4 to 5.6 percent of all classrooms. The range in estimates is again explained by the higher and lower statistical cutoff points we used to determine whether a classroom should be suspected of cheating.

This pattern of results indicates that cheating on one subject test is not an isolated affair. Therefore, if we have detected genuine cheating, one would expect that a teacher who cheats on one part of the test would be more likely to cheat on other parts of the test. Also, a teacher who cheated one year would be more likely to cheat the following year. Finally, to the extent that cheating is either condoned by the principal or carried out by the school's testing coordinator, one would expect to find multiple classrooms in a school cheating in any given year and perhaps even that cheating in a school one year predicts cheating there in future years.

Our analysis indicated that our measures of cheating were strongly correlated across all of these dimensions. For example, if wholesale cheating had occurred on one test in a given subject within a particular classroom, it was ten times more likely that cheating on a test in another subject would be identified in the same classroom. There was also evidence of correlation in cheating within schools, suggesting some centralized effort by a school counselor, test coordinator, or the principal. Finally, we found that cheating in the classroom the previous year predicted cheating this year. Classrooms that cheated in the same subject the previous year were nearly nine times more likely to cheat this year than a classroom that did not cheat last year.

The Retesting Experiment

Because of the necessarily indirect nature of our empirical strategy, we explored a range of supplemental tests designed to assess the validity of the estimates. These all confirmed that our methods are highly effective at isolating cases of potential cheating and avoiding false positives (innocent teachers accused of cheating). But perhaps the most compelling evidence for the validity of our methods comes from the results of a unique policy intervention.

A few weeks after the spring 2002 ITBS exam was administered, the Chicago Public Schools gave us the opportunity to retest more than 100 classrooms under controlled circumstances that made cheating virtually impossible. The retested classrooms were of three types. First, we identified the set of classrooms most likely to have cheated, based on the prevalence of suspicious answer strings and unusual gains in test scores on the initial spring 2002 exam. The second type of classroom, which we used as a control group, consisted of classrooms with large test-score gains but no evidence of cheating in their answer strings, a sign of plain-old good teaching. These students would be expected to maintain their gains when retested, though there might be some regression. The third type of classroom, which served as another control group, consisted of randomly selected classrooms.

Cheating by school personnel increased following the introduction of high-stakes testing, particularly in the lowest-performing classrooms.

Classrooms identified as "most likely to have cheated" experienced gains on the initial spring 2002 test that were nearly twice as large as the typical Chicago classroom (see Figure 2).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the retest, however, those excess gains disappeared completely—the gains between the spring 2001 test and the spring 2002 retest were close to the system-wide average. In stark contrast, classrooms identified as potentially having good teachers scored even higher on the reading retest than they did on the initial test. Their math scores fell slightly on the retest, but they continued to post extremely large gains. The randomly selected classrooms also maintained almost all of their gains when retested, as would be expected.

What Predicts Cheating?

Using the indicators of teacher cheating described above, we conducted a series of analyses to examine the relationship between cheating and a variety of classroom and school characteristics. Several striking findings emerged.

On the one hand, classrooms that performed poorly the previous year were much more likely to cheat. For example, a classroom that scored one standard deviation below average the previous year was 23 percent more likely to cheat the next year. Likewise, classrooms in schools with lower achievement, higher poverty rates, and more African-American students were more likely to cheat. Classrooms with a higher proportion of students included in the official test reporting (in other words, fewer kids designated as disabled or limited English proficient and thus excluded from the accountability system) were also more likely to cheat—a 10 percentage point increase in the proportion of students in a class whose test scores "count" increased the likelihood of cheating by roughly 20 percent. Because a greater portion of their students would contribute to the overall assessment of the classroom and school under the accountability policy, these teachers perhaps felt more pressure to ensure that the students in their classrooms scored high on the exams. Teachers who administered the exam to their own students were approximately 50 percent more likely to cheat.

On the other hand, classrooms with students from multiple grades were 65 percent *less* likely to cheat than classrooms where all students were in the same grade. It is probably more difficult for teachers in such classrooms to cheat since they must administer two different test forms to students, which will necessarily have different correct answers. Classrooms in schools with teachers who graduated from more-prestigious undergraduate institutions were also less likely to cheat; classrooms in schools with younger teachers were more likely to cheat.

Reusing a test form that had been administered in a previous year had no statistically significant impact on cheating. This suggests that teachers' taking old exams and teaching specific questions to stu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cheating could be virtually eliminated at a relatively low cost through the implementation of safeguards like those used by the Educational Testing Service.

dents is not an important component of what we are detecting as cheating (though anecdotal evidence suggests that this practice exists).

From a public-policy perspective, especially in the era of high-stakes testing, perhaps the most important question is how cheating responds to incentives. Before 1996, ITBS scores merely provided teachers and parents with a sense of how a child was progressing academically. But beginning in 1996, the Chicago school district launched an initiative designed to hold students and teachers accountable for student learning.

The reform agenda had two main elements. The first involved putting schools "on probation" if less than 15 percent of students scored at or above national norms on the ITBS reading exam. (Students' performance in math was not used to determine probation status.) Schools placed on probation and exhibiting little subsequent improvement could be reconstituted; this meant closing the school and dismissing or reassigning all personnel. The second piece of the accountability reform was an end to social promotion—the practice of passing students to the next grade regardless of their performance. Under the new policy, students in the 3rd, 6th, and 8th grades had to meet minimum standards on the ITBS in both reading and mathematics in order to be promoted to the next grade. The promotion standards were implemented in the spring of 1997 for 3rd and 6th graders. Decisions on promotion were based solely on students' scores in reading comprehension and mathematics.

As might be expected, the cheating by school personnel increased following the introduction of high-stakes testing, particularly in the lowest-performing classrooms. For example, the likelihood of cheating in a classroom that was one standard deviation below the mean increased by roughly 29 percent in response to the school probation policy and 43 percent due to the ending of social promotion. The magnitude of these changes is particularly great considering that no elementary school on probation was actually reconstituted during this period and that the social promotion policy has no direct effects on teachers' pay or job security. By contrast, classrooms that performed one standard deviation above the average experienced no significant change in cheating in response to these two policies.

Conclusions

The results of this study demonstrate the value of statistical analysis to school districts interested in catching cheaters or deterring future cheating. The findings from the retesting experiment were used to launch investigations of 29 classrooms. While these investigations have not been completed, it is expected that disciplinary action will be brought against a substantial number of teachers, test administrators, and principals. Perhaps more important, a preliminary analysis of the 2003 test results suggests that the incidence of cheating has declined in the district.

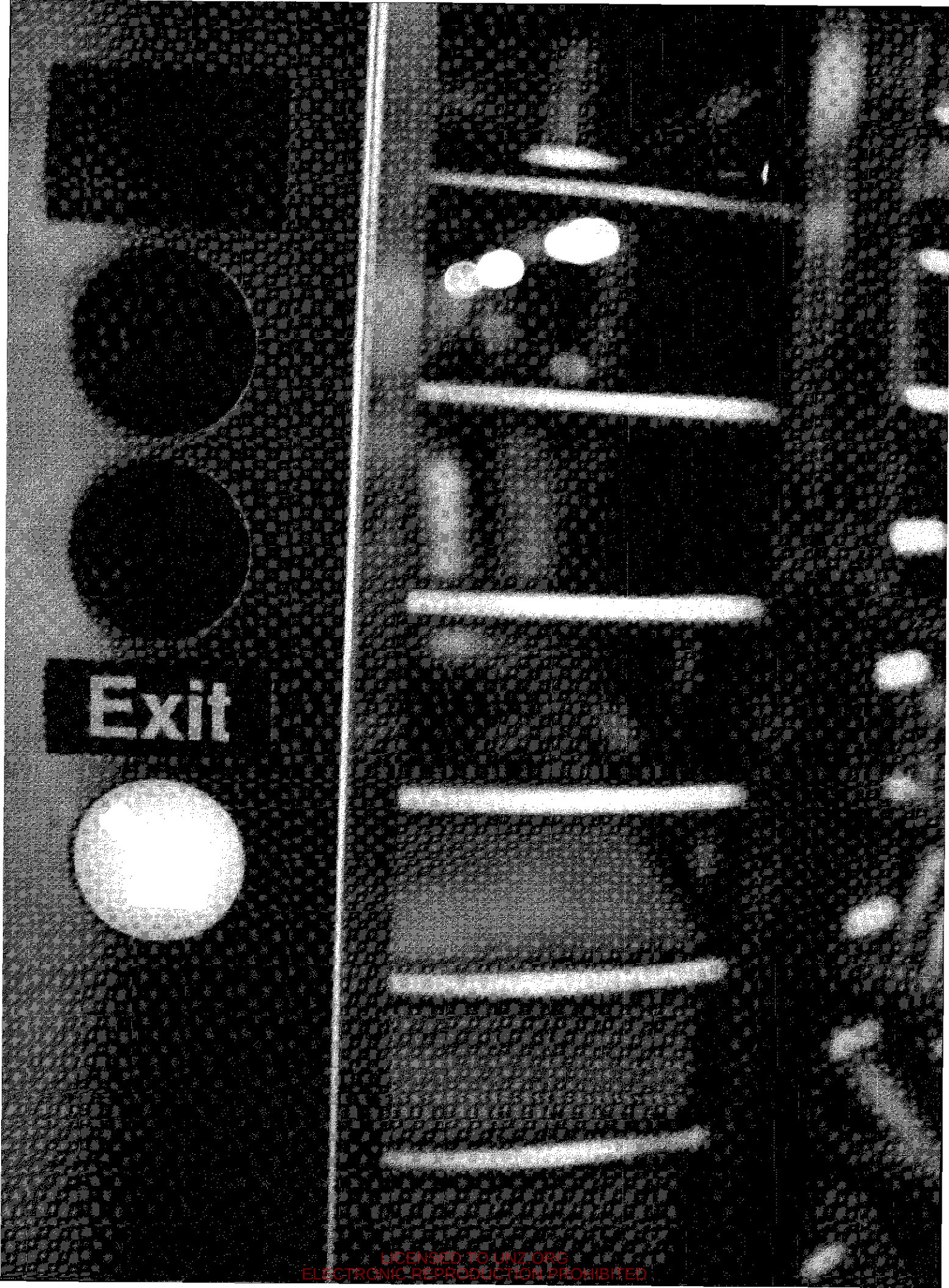
Moreover, there is a more positive aspect to our methods than just the isolation of instances of potential cheating. Using these tools, we were able to identify a set of classrooms that made extraordinary test-score gains without any indication of cheating. This will pave the way to identifying and rewarding outstanding teachers.

While evidence of cheating is sometimes used to impugn high-stakes testing programs, our results actually show that explicit cheating by school personnel is not likely to be a serious enough problem by itself to call into question high-stakes testing, both because the most egregious forms of cheating are relatively rare and, more important, because cheating could be virtually eliminated at a relatively low cost through the implementation of proper safeguards, such as those used by the Educational Testing Service on the SAT or GRE exams.

However, the sort of cheating that our methods are capable of catching is just one of many potential behavioral responses to high-stakes testing. Other responses, like teaching to the test and cheating in a subtler manner, such as giving the students extra time, are presumably also present but harder to measure. The challenge for educators and policymakers will be to develop a system that captures the obvious benefits of high-stakes testing as a means of providing incentives while minimizing the possible distortions that these measures induce.

–Brian A. Jacob is an assistant professor at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and Steven D. Levitt is a professor of economics and social sciences at the University of Chicago. A more detailed account of this investigation can be found in the August 2003 issue of the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The REVOLVING DOOR

A path-breaking study of teachers in Texas reveals that working conditions matter more than salary

EXPERIENCED TEACHERS ARE, on average, more effective at raising student performance than those in their early years of teaching. This gives rise to the concern that too many teachers leave the profession after less than a full career and that too many leave troubled inner-city schools for suburban ones. Until now, the roots of these problems have not been well understood. In particular, it is not known whether teachers leave schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged and low-achieving populations for financial reasons or because of the working conditions associated with serving these students. Nor are there good estimates of what kinds of salary increases would need to be offered to slow the turnover among teachers.

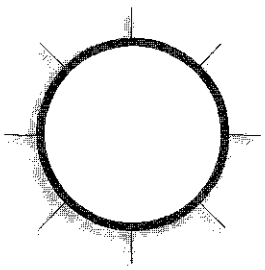
The chief obstacle to resolving these issues has been the difficulty of separating the effects of teachers' salary levels from their working conditions and preferences. The outstanding suburban school that retains most of its teachers is likely to be attractive on a number of levels: the pay is good, students are high performing, and parents are supportive. Since all three factors help in attracting and retaining teachers, it becomes difficult to calculate the degree to which each factor separately affects a teacher's decision to return to that school the following year. Conversely, the school that has disadvantaged and low-performing students may suffer high rates of teacher turnover, but sorting out the causes of turnover is difficult. Doing so requires detailed information for enough teachers and students to allow analysts to distinguish statistically among the various factors that affect teachers' decisions.

Fortunately, important parts of the necessary information are now available for elementary schools in the state of Texas for the years 1993 through 1996. Working in cooperation with the Texas Education Agency, the University of Texas at Dallas's Texas Schools Project has combined various data sets to create a database of key characteristics of both teachers and students during

PHOTOGRAPH BY MASTERFILE

by ERIC A. HANUSHEK, JOHN F. KAIN, AND STEVEN G. RIVKIN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Teachers transfer from one school to another more as a reaction to the characteristics of their students than in response to better salaries in other schools.

this period in all Texas public schools. This information includes the race, ethnicity, and gender of both students and teachers; students' eligibility for a subsidized lunch; and students' performance on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), a criterion-reference test administered each spring to students in grades 3 through 8. The database also contains annual information about the teachers: their years of experience, their education and salary levels, the grades and subjects they teach, and the size of their classes.

Our analysis of these data reveals that teachers transfer from one school to another—or exit the Texas public school system altogether—more as a reaction to the characteristics of their students than in response to better salaries in other schools. This tends to leave disadvantaged, low-achieving students with relatively inexperienced teachers. Because teachers appear so unresponsive to salary levels, it would take enormous across-the-board increases to stem these flows. Indeed, the results suggest that policymakers ought to consider selective pay increases, preferably keyed to quality, for work in inner-city schools, together with efforts to improve the working conditions in these schools.

Reasons for Leaving

Teachers decide whether to remain at a school for a multiplicity of reasons, which can be divided into four main categories: 1) characteristics of the job, including salary and working conditions; 2) alternative job opportunities; 3) teachers' own job and family preferences; and 4) school districts' personnel policies. Although we were not able to look at the ways in which all of these factors affect teachers' decisions with respect to their employment situation, we were able to examine directly the impact of salary and certain working conditions. We were also able to draw some reasonable inferences about how family considerations and alternative job opportunities influence their decisions by examining how teachers' choices differ by gender and experience.

Admittedly, working conditions is a broad concept that can cover everything from class size to discipline problems to student achievement levels. Though we do not have data on every aspect of teachers' working conditions, we do know certain characteristics of their students that many believe affect the teaching conditions at a school: the percentage of low-income students at the school (as estimated by the percentage eligible for a subsidized lunch), the shares of students who are African-American or Hispanic, average student test scores, and class sizes. Whether these characteristics directly affect teachers' decisionmaking or indicate other less tangible factors (such as the disciplinary climate or bureaucratic environment at the school) cannot be determined.

When looking at the impact of working conditions on retention rates, one needs to take into account other factors that may affect teachers' employment choices. Some teachers possess skills that are considered valuable in the marketplace. For instance, math and science teachers may find more competition for their services in the private sector than an English teacher would. However, our study focuses on elementary teachers, who tend to have similar educational backgrounds and similar opportunities outside the education system. As a result, differences in opportunities among teachers of different subjects should not be very important for this analysis.

A more important consideration is that many teachers may wish to remain at a particular location for other than job-related reasons, perhaps out of a desire to live near their hometown or near their spouse's workplace. Consequently the availability of jobs in the locality may be an important determinant of the probability of exiting a school, and the control for any systematic differences across regions within Texas.

Retention rates can also be affected by the number of years a teacher has spent in a particular location. The more years working in a particular district, the more costly it becomes to leave, simply because pay, responsibilities, and job opportunities are often tied directly to experience within the same school district. The financial attractiveness of moving elsewhere also attenuates with the passage of time. Because many districts credit a transferring teacher with only a limited number of years of experience, teachers may have to take a salary cut if they switch school districts. In general, switching careers grows costlier with age and experience. One must give up the higher salary that comes with experience within a particular field, and the time to accumulate gains from any change in job or career grows shorter as one ages. For this reason, our analysis takes into account the number of years teachers have held their jobs by comparing only teachers with similar levels of experience.

Other relevant differences among teachers may arise from their family circumstances, such as the job opportunities of a spouse or a desire to stay home with young children or to enjoy the benefits of home ownership. For example, many

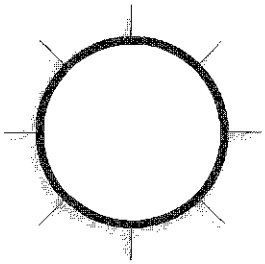
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

female teachers who leave teaching do so in order to leave the labor market altogether, often for family reasons. We unfortunately lack information on family structure, sources of income other than salary, the location or type of housing, and whether and where a spouse works. However, we are able to look separately at teachers grouped by gender, giving us an opportunity to assess the extent to which female and male teachers are influenced by different considerations.

Ethnicity may also affect decisionmaking. Teachers may prefer to teach in schools where they share the ethnic characteristics of students, or they may find it easier to obtain a position if administrators prefer instructors who have certain ethnic characteristics. To ascertain whether ethnic background affects teachers' decisionmaking, we also look separately at white, African-American, and Hispanic teachers.

One limitation of our study is that we do not have direct information on school districts' hiring and retention practices. Districts have options when hiring, and the willingness of a teacher to leave a position will depend on the availability of an attractive position elsewhere. Although few teachers are involuntarily separated from their jobs, we do not know whether a job change is determined primarily by a teacher's decision or by that of the employer, and the circumstances undoubtedly affect both opportunities and the range of choices a teacher will consider. Our lack of information about employer-initiated moves may lead to an underestimate of the improvements in pay and working conditions achieved by teachers who move voluntarily, but the size of this underestimate is probably not very large.

Movement between and within Districts



Teaching lower-achieving students is a strong factor in decisions to leave Texas public schools.

Nationwide, approximately one-fifth of all teachers decide to leave the school at which they are teaching each year. The pattern in Texas is roughly the same as in the nation as a whole. On average, in each year between 1993 and 1996, more than 18 percent of Texas teachers decided not to remain at the school at which they were teaching. More than 6 percent changed schools within their districts, another 5 percent switched from one district to another, and 7 percent left Texas public schools altogether.

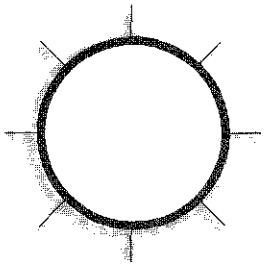
Let's look first at the changes in salary typically experienced by teachers moving to a new district. Instead of relying on salary data reported for each individual teacher, we calculate district average salaries for teachers in each of their first ten years of experience during the period from 1993 to 1996. These averages are based on regular pay for teachers without advanced degrees and exclude extra pay for coaching or other activities. (The latter is not an important part of compensation: more than 85 percent of teachers receive no extra pay, and the median extra pay for those who do receive it is about $1,000 per year.) We use these averages to characterize the salary schedule of each district and then estimate the potential salary change resulting from a move, given the experience level of each teacher. For example, the salary change for a teacher who switches districts after four years of teaching is assumed to equal the average salary of fifth-year teachers in the new district minus the salary for that level of experience in the old district.

On average, teachers who move between districts after no more than two years at a school improve their salaries, though just barely. Male teachers gain 1.2 percent in salary, while women gain 0.7 percent. Even these small gains begin to disappear for teachers with more experience. Overall, the average annual salary gain among all teachers with less than ten years' experience is 0.4 percent of annual salary, or roughly $100. Women with three to nine years of experience who decide to change districts actually take, on average, a small pay cut. In short, most teachers moving between districts do not receive substantially better pay in their new jobs.

The picture for working conditions is quite different. There is strong evidence that teachers moving between districts have the opportunity to teach higher-achieving, higher-income, nonminority students. The findings for achievement are the clearest and most consistent. The average job switcher moving from one district to another moved to a district whose average achievement was 0.07 standard deviations higher on the TAAS than the district the teacher left. (The difference is three percentile points on a 100-point scale.) The shares of the district's students who were African-American, Hispanic, or low income also declined significantly for movers. On average, the districts to which teachers moved had 2 percentage points fewer African-American students and 4.4 percentage points fewer Hispanic students than the districts they had left. The percentage of low-income students in movers' districts fell by more than 6 percent.

These patterns were even more pronounced for teachers who moved from urban to suburban districts. The salaries of such teachers actually declined by 0.7 percent, on average, as a result of their moves. Meanwhile, the average achievement in the new districts increased by 0.35 standard deviations (14 percentile points), and the shares of African-American and Hispanic students decreased by 14 and 20 percentage points, respectively.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Since teachers' exiting rates are smaller at schools with more advantaged students, these schools also enjoy more experienced teachers.

Teachers who moved between different suburban districts experienced similar, albeit smaller, changes in student characteristics. Student achievement in their new districts was one-tenth of a standard deviation higher, while the percentages of African-American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students all declined.

We can gain further insight into the factors associated with teacher mobility by examining the pre- and post-move school characteristics for teachers moving to a new school within the same district. These results confirm that teachers who move between schools within urban districts typically arrive at a school with higher average student achievement (0.11 standard deviations) and a smaller percentage of minority and low-income students. In other words, those who choose to change schools within districts appear to follow the same attributes, seeking out schools with fewer academically and economically disadvantaged students. These patterns are also consistent with the notion that new teachers are often placed in the most difficult teaching situations and that senior teachers can often choose comfier positions within the system.

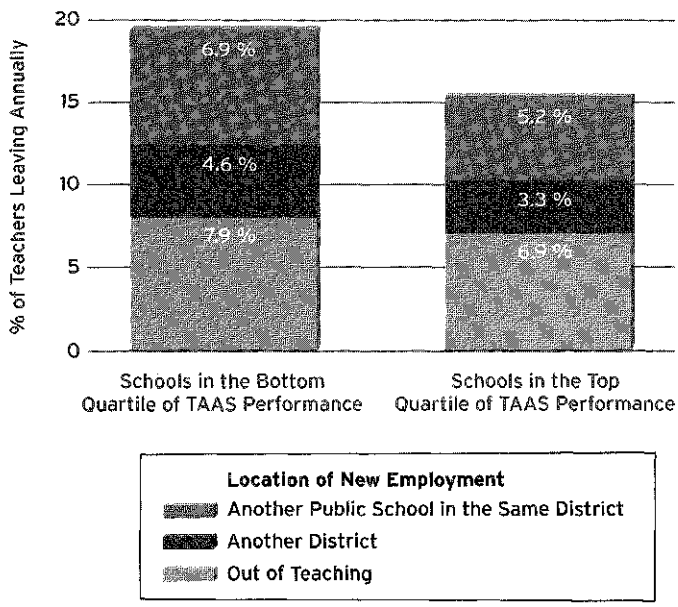
Important differences emerge, however, when we separate teachers by their own ethnic background. African-American teachers tend to move to schools with *higher* percentages of African-American enrollment than their previous schools, regardless of whether they change districts or simply move to a new school in the same district. However, the average change in the percentage of Hispanic students for teachers of Hispanic descent is not much different from the changes experienced by teachers as a whole. The typical gap in average test scores between their current and former school is also much smaller for African-American and Hispanic teachers who have switched schools.

It is not clear whether these ethnic differences are the result of teachers' preferences or of the job opportunities available to them. It could be that African-American teachers prefer to work at a school near where they live. If so, then residential segregation by race may lead to the selection of schools with more African-American students. Or teachers may simply prefer to teach students of a similar ethnic background. Alternatively, job opportunities for African-American teachers may be more extensive in schools with higher proportions of African-American students.

All this movement of teachers among schools obviously affects the composition of the teaching force at particular schools. Since exiting rates are smaller at schools with more advantaged students, these schools also enjoy more experienced teachers. The pattern is particularly striking when schools are grouped according to their average level of student achievement. As Figure 1 shows, almost 20 percent of teachers in schools in the bottom quartile of student achievement leave their schools each year, while in the top-quartile schools only 15 percent leave. The driving force of this relationship is not teachers' leaving urban districts for suburban ones; on the contrary, most of the difference in leaving rates between these types of schools is caused by teachers moving to new schools within their original district. Since teachers with fewer than two years of experience tend to be less effective than more experienced teachers, existing mobility patterns in Texas are likely to adversely affect the achievement of disadvantaged students.

Escaping Low Achievement (Figure 1)

Schools where students score, on average, in the bottom quartile on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) lose almost 20 percent of their teachers each year, compared with an exit rate of just 15 percent in schools where students score in the top quartile. The result is that low-achieving students are more likely to be stuck with rookie teachers.



SOURCE: Authors

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Salaries and Student Demographics

The analysis to this point has not disentangled the effects of salaries from the effects of the working conditions associated with students of varying achievement and family backgrounds. To identify more precisely the independent effects of the multiple factors affecting teachers' choices, we use regression analysis to estimate the separate effects of salary differences and school characteristics on the probability that a teacher will leave a school district in a given year, holding constant a variety of other factors, including class size and the type of community (urban, suburban, or rural) in which the district is located. We also compare the impact of salaries and school characteristics on the probability of switching to another district with their impact on the probability of leaving teaching altogether.

The results of this analysis confirm that teachers are more likely to leave districts with low average achievement scores. Ethnic composition of the student body is also an important determinant both of the probability of leaving the public schools entirely and of switching from one school district to another. White teachers, regardless of their teaching experience, will tend to move to schools with fewer African-American and Hispanic students. Less experienced white teachers are also more likely to leave the public schools altogether if they come from schools with higher concentrations of African-American and Hispanic students. For African-American and Hispanic teachers, the reactions to varying concentrations of African-American students are almost exactly the opposite.

The differential effect of the ethnic composition of the student body for white and African-American teachers could reflect personnel policies that prefer minority teachers in schools with higher concentrations of minority students. But teachers' own preferences may be even more important, as suggested by the fact that the decision to leave the Texas public schools altogether—a decision much more closely related to the individual teacher's preferences than to the district—is influenced in the same way by the schools' ethnic composition.

If the ethnic composition of the school is the most important factor affecting teachers' decisions to change jobs, financial considerations are also relevant, especially when it comes to a decision by a somewhat less experienced male teacher to move from one district to another. For male teachers with fewer than three years of experience, the estimated change in the probability of switching districts for a 10 percent increase in salary is 2.6 percentage points; for men with three to five years of experience, the estimated change for a salary increase of the same magnitude is 3.4 percentage points; for still more experienced male teachers, financial effects trail off, down to essentially zero for those with more than 20 years of experience.

The results indicate that higher salaries significantly reduce the probability that male teachers will leave a district. The magnitude of the effect is largest for those early in their career. By contrast, the effects of salary difference for more experienced women teachers are significantly smaller. While females in their first five years of teaching are somewhat responsive to salary differences, such differentials have no observable effects on those with six or more years of experience.

In short, the financial impact on the decisions of female teachers is less than half that for men. Because they represent the vast majority of elementary teachers, women's unresponsiveness to financial differentials is important to the subsequent policy discussion.

Policy Implications

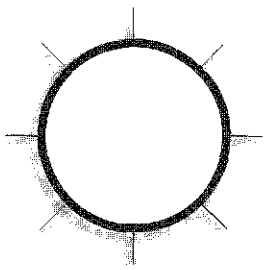
The results presented above confirm the difficulty that schools serving academically disadvantaged students have in retaining teachers, particularly those early in their careers. Teaching lower-achieving students—whether because teachers find it more difficult or less rewarding—is a strong factor in decisions to leave Texas public schools, and the magnitude of the effect holds across the full range of teachers' experience levels. There is also strong evidence that a higher rate of minority enrollment increases the probability that white teachers will leave a school. By contrast, increases in the shares of African-American and Hispanic students reduce the probability that African-American and Hispanic teachers will leave.

Given these findings, a key question is how to reduce the flows out of low-achieving, high-minority schools and out of the teaching profession altogether. One oft-proposed solution is to provide teachers with "combat pay"—salary increments designed to encourage them to remain at a tough school. But how large would the increase need to be in order to neutralize the effects of difficult working conditions? Let's consider this closely.

The situation is complicated by the fact that most elementary-school teachers in Texas are white females (only 20 percent are African-American or Hispanic, while only 14 percent are male). As noted earlier, female teachers are less responsive to increases in salary, meaning that the bonus required to keep them at a school will be larger than for males. In addition, white teachers are the most likely to exit low-achieving, high-minority schools, meaning that it will take even larger increases to retain them. If the teaching corps looked much different—say, if the teachers in urban elementary schools were mostly African-American and Hispanic males—the costs of the "combat pay" solution would be lower.

Based on our findings of what causes teachers to leave their schools, we calculated the salary increases that would be necessary to offset the effects of difficult working conditions in large urban versus suburban schools. These calculations, performed separately for white male and female teachers in their early careers, are shown in Figure 2. The findings suggest that truly large boosts in salary would be needed, particularly for women. Female teachers in large urban school districts would require a 25 percent initial increase in compensation, rising to more than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



To retain teachers in urban areas, truly large boosts in salary would be needed, particularly for women.

40 percent when they reach three to five years of experience. Moreover, this is only in the "typical" urban school. For the neediest or most troubled schools in urban areas, even the differentials calculated in Figure 2 would probably not be sufficient to stem the high levels of turnover in such schools.

Not only would across-the-board salary increases of 25 to 40 percent for teachers in urban areas be an enormously expensive reform, but it would be difficult to target such a solution, since teachers typically negotiate salary schedules that apply to all the teachers in the district, not just to those in the most disadvantaged schools. Similarly, even if targeted to the most disadvantaged schools, any increases in salaries would almost certainly go to new and middle-career teachers alike, even though our results indicate that salary differentials are nearly irrelevant for women teachers with ten or more years of experience.

As a result, improving the working conditions of teachers may prove both more effective and more realistic. Unfortunately, at this time, we do not fully understand the working conditions that are most important. But, to the extent that other characteristics of schools where disadvantaged students are found—such as safety and disciplinary problems, more bureaucratic rules, poor leadership, greater student turnover, or a greater distance to work—are important elements, improving these working conditions could mitigate the turnover problem we have identified. And these improvements might have their own effect on student performance.

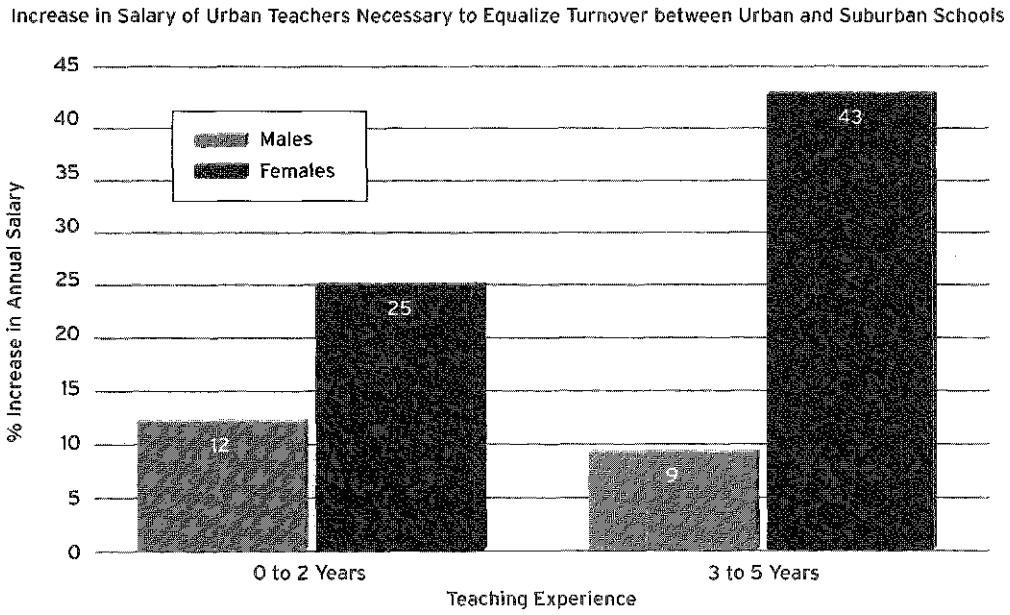
Finally, it is important to note that this study focuses solely on how many teachers move among schools and out of teaching. We have not examined the quality of the teachers who move from one district to another or leave teaching altogether. The actual cost of improving the quality of instruction depends crucially on whether good teachers, not just experienced teachers, are being retained. Salary policies that are guided just by the characteristics of the students in a school will retain both the good and the bad teachers.

We do know from our other work that differences in teacher quality are more significant than the differences arising from having inexperienced teachers. Therefore, an approach with more appeal might be simply to accept the fact that there may be greater turnover in schools serving a larger disadvantaged population, but then to concentrate much more attention and resources on the quality dimension. While we do not have much experience with such policies, they seem like the most feasible way to deal with the problems of schools serving low-income and minority students.

–Eric A. Hanushek is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, and Steven G. Rivkin is an associate professor of economics at Amherst College. The late John F. Kain was a professor of economics and political economy at the University of Texas at Dallas.

How Much "Combat Pay" Is Necessary? (Figure 2)

Substantial boosts in salary would be needed to retain teachers in low-achieving, high-minority schools at rates similar to the retention rates experienced in suburban schools. The large bonuses required for women—from 25 to 43 percent depending on experience—reflect their unresponsiveness to salary differentials.



Note: Estimates based on the differences in average achievement and in the shares of African-American and Hispanic students between large urban and suburban districts.

SOURCE: Authors

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Still Dreaming

The quest for equal opportunity continues

The American Dream and the Public Schools

By Jennifer Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick

Oxford University Press, 2003, $35; 301 pages.

Reviewed by William A. Galston

In *The American Dream and the Public Schools*, Jennifer Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick offer a panoramic view of American public education and the efforts to reform it. Just a list of key chapter headings and topics—desegregation, finance, structural reform, school choice, inclusion—reveals the book's ambitious scope. It might be described as a literature review with attitude.

The attitude—the use of the "American Dream" as the central analytical concept—will be familiar to readers of Hochschild's previous work. At the core of the American Dream is equality of opportunity, a notion that artfully blends both collective and individual responsibilities. The role of government is to provide everyone with a fair chance to pursue success. Individuals then use this opportunity to go as far as their talents and drive will allow.

Public schools are the principal vehicle for translating the dream into reality. However, while the authors briefly acknowledge that progress has been made, the thrust of their argument is that the efforts to promote school desegregation and equitable school funding have failed thus far.

For the most part, Hochschild and Scovronick blame this reality on the unwillingness of better-off families and communities to approve adequate transfers to the worse-off. In the absence of such transfers, the intergenerational transmission of advantage will continue unabated, with ever more damaging effects in a society whose rewards are increasingly keyed to the attainment of education and the possession of higher-order skills.

It would not be unfair to describe Hochschild and Scovronick as bloodied but unbowed 1960s liberals. Their hope is for a system of public education in which children of all races and classes learn side by side, in classrooms equally endowed with key resources. This hope is unattainable, they believe, unless citizens strike a balance between self-interest and the common good. "Too many Americans," they write, "are unwilling to take the required risk, pay the necessary price, or surrender their initial advantage."

This book suffers from a persistent underestimation of the role of culture in shaping behavior.

Important parts of this thesis are undeniably true. Efforts to reduce school segregation have stalled, as has progress toward eliminating achievement gaps between white students and most racial and ethnic minorities. Income and wealth are less equally distributed than they were 30 years ago. But can these realities be reasonably attributed to a collective failure since the 1960s to fund the public schools? My reading of the evidence says no.

Consider the following: Not only has inflation-adjusted spending per pupil nearly doubled since 1970 (and tripled since 1960), it has also become substantially more equal across jurisdictions. According to figures from the Department of Education and the Census Bureau, the ratio of spending between the median school district and school districts in the 75th and 90th percentiles has decreased, while the ratio between the median and the 10th and 25th percentiles has increased.

Citing the research of William Evans and his colleagues, Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips conclude in their 1998 volume *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, "Despite glaring economic inequalities between a few rich suburbs and nearby central cities, the average black child and the average white child now live in school districts that spend almost exactly the same amount per pupil." This is what we would expect in light of the fact, cited by Hochschild and Scovronick, that the states' contribution to K–12 education funding has risen by 10 percentage points over the past three decades, a trend that tends to lean against local inequalities.

Much of the increased spending has gone to reduce class size; the average pupil/teacher ratio has fallen from more than 22 in 1970 to roughly 17 today.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Here again the process of equalization is evident. Harvard University scholar Ronald Ferguson has shown that average pupil/teacher ratios are unrelated either to the racial composition of schools or to the percentage of students eligible for free lunches (a standard proxy for family income).

None of this is to deny that additional resources for lower-achieving schools and districts could be beneficial, especially if these resources were invested in policies with a strong research base, such as smaller classes for minority students in the earliest grades. Indeed, it is sensible to believe that schools with high percentages of poor and minority students may need higher per-pupil allocations than wealthier districts. This is in part because disadvantaged districts typically must spend more on security and special education and also because poor and minority students are more likely to arrive at the schoolhouse door with family and neighborhood-based problems. My point is only that during the past three decades, public education has made more progress toward resource equity than one would conclude from the authors' pessimism.

"Liberal Materialism"

A number of issues deserve more emphasis than Hochschild and Scovronick choose to give them. Let me mention just three, selected from a long list.

First, I would attach more weight to institutional factors unrelated to family or community wealth that skew the allocation of vital resources. For example, a considerable body of evidence suggests that the best teachers make the most difference for kids at the bottom. A rational system would bring the two together. However, present practices do just the opposite; seniority and other work rules allow many of the best teachers to opt out of the classrooms and schools where they could do the most good. And as the authors note in passing, the transformation of many urban school districts into jobs programs and patronage systems has made taxpayers and public officials reluctant to pour additional resources down what they consider a rathole.

Second, the authors fail to give enough weight to non-school-based influences on student achievement. In a path-breaking analysis, UCLA scholar Meredith Phillips showed that at least half of the black-white gap is attributable to differences that exist before children enter 1st grade. It is unfair to hold public schools responsible for these differences, and it is unwise to assume that any feasible education reform could adequately compensate for them. Among other things, we need a new partnership between the federal government and the states to ensure that all three- and four-year-olds can attend preschools, regardless of family resources, if their parents choose to send them. (In fairness, I suspect the authors would agree with this recommendation.)

Third, this book suffers from what might be termed liberal materialism—that is, a persistent underestimation of the role of culture in shaping individual behavior and social outcomes. For example, rigorous research has found that income plays only a minor role in explaining the black-white achievement gap. Factors such as parenting practices are far more significant. Another example: the authors cite the overseas schools run by the Department of Defense to support the thesis that a high level of racial integration boosts minority achievement. Maybe so. But they overlook an obvious alternative hypothesis—namely, that a military culture focused on discipline, respect for authority, and merit is disproportionately beneficial for minority students, especially when it is reinforced by similar attitudes among their parents.

The authors offer a clear, challenging argument and mobilize a mountain of evidence in its support. But every social scientist knows that confirming evidence can be found for nearly any hypothesis. The harder task is to expose one's cherished theories to challenging evidence and to remain open to a range of alternative explanations. *The American Dream and the Public Schools* is a superb brief for the traditional liberal interpretation of the ills of our education system. But one need not be a conservative to believe that it is far from the whole story.

–William A. Galston is a professor in the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs.

Eye of the Beholder

Private and public schools, close up

All Else Equal: Are Public and Private Schools Different?

By Luis Benveniste, Martin Carnoy, and Richard Rothstein

RoutledgeFalmer, 2002, $19.95; 224 pages.

Reviewed by Paul T. Hill

All Else Equal's central claim is that privately run schools are not always good, a truth with which even the most fervent advocates of school choice would agree. Being a school of choice, and therefore subject to competition and market forces, is not enough.

The authors reached this conclusion after interviewing principals, teachers, and parents in 16 California public and private schools, spending extra time in 8 of the schools. Their small sample of schools was further stretched so as to compare private versus public sponsorship, elementary versus middle schools (the sample included no high schools), and higher- versus lower- income stu-

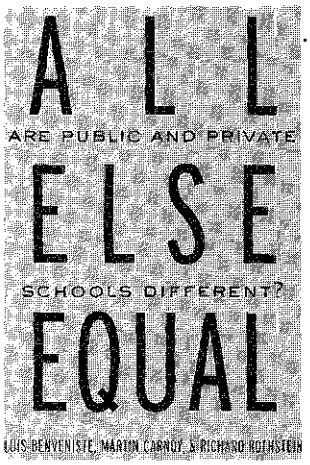
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dent populations. Although Benveniste, Carnoy, and Rothstein provided little information on how the schools were chosen or how data were collected and analyzed, it is clear that they looked at school organization, the learning climate, teaching methods, and relationships with parents.

Despite these limitations, the authors' point that privatization does not guarantee success, even if generally acknowledged, is worth underscoring. Good private schools will not emerge, even in the theoretical long run, if there is no serious investment in them; if the rules for funding them and allowing students to choose them change constantly; and if bad ones are not eliminated by competition. Likewise, charter schools, even if they are privately run, are not likely to be very good if they continue to receive less funding than traditional public schools; if they are started with sweat equity by people who hold mystical beliefs about organizational performance; and if they are run in an atmosphere of official hostility from the public school establishment.

The book dwells on a second point that also can hardly be gainsaid: private and public elementary schools serving disadvantaged children resemble one another in many respects. Such schools, responsible for educating many students who enter kindergarten without knowledge of even the alphabet, need to focus on very basic skills. And any school located in a chaotic neighborhood must put a lot of effort into custodial care, regardless of whether it is public or private. Such schools will differ significantly from those in suburbia, where the children generally come from educated households in which parents routinely provide bedtime reading and a buffet of enrichment activities.

However, these basic observations do not lead to the conclusions the authors wish to draw from them. Consistent with their earlier writings, Benveniste, Carnoy, and Rothstein insist that social class dominates all aspects of education. So pervasive is its influence, they argue, that public and private schools in poor neighborhoods not only resemble one another but must be essentially one and the same; any differences are merely cosmetic. They stick to this claim even though their own case studies show that private elementary schools serving poor kids provide safer, quieter, and more-focused and orderly environments. Parents and teachers in private schools also express much more trust in one another. These differences cannot possibly matter, the authors claim.



The authors gravely misuse the qualitative research method, whose essence is close observation of the institution under study.

Or, if they do, they are caused not by the unique efforts of private schools but by their "creaming" the best students and most supportive parents—and by their ability to make illegitimate demands on parents because of their long waiting lists.

Here is where the book starts to unravel. In the first chapter, the authors argued that any achievement differences between poor children in public and private schools must be due to unobservable differences in those children's families. The families are all poor, but the private school families must be more supportive of education, though this is never seen directly. But after building their argument on unobserved information, they then dismiss information that is before their very eyes. Presented with clear evidence that private and public schools differ in the educational environment and culture they create, they argue that these highly visible differences in schools are either unimportant or illegitimate. By this logic, the unobservable is real and the observable is bogus. Strange for a book that is supposedly based on a series of case studies of schools.

The book thus gravely misuses the qualitative research method, a method whose very essence is the close, direct, careful, unbiased observation of the institution under study. Eschewing the complexity of what they observe, the authors leap to simplistic, one-dimensional conclusions. After finding that certain practices exist in both public and private schools, Benveniste, Carnoy, and Rothstein decide that the schools are therefore all the same, without asking whether the factors are equally important in both settings. For example, they note that, just as public school principals complain about the hundreds of directives they receive from the school district's central office, some Catholic school principals dislike even the few instructions sent from the archdiocese each year. To these authors, the huge difference in the number of such regulations is of no consequence. Similarly, after reporting that all schools in low-income neighborhoods have difficulty finding good teachers, they conclude that the conditions of teaching in all such schools must be the same.

Case-based research is valuable because it can show how organizations work in detail. But comparisons must be subtle, nuanced, and disciplined by com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mon sense. Microsoft and a garage software company are not the same because they both use computers. Moreover, case studies can be valid only if the types of organizations being compared are distinct from one another. In this case, the comparison between public and private schools was blurred by the fact that half the public schools in the authors' sample were either charter schools or recently reconstituted schools operating under special rules. These schools are supposed to be semi-independent and to resemble private schools in many ways. One is left asking whether there is any basis for the finding that public and private schools are not different.

But empirical evidence is not what drives *All Else Equal* anyway. The book is essentially a statement of a faith: that urban public schools are what they are because of the children and parents they serve, and private schools could not possibly be any different. Therefore, if private schools are safer and quieter, it is because they cherry pick children who are eager to learn and have parents who will defer to teachers' judgments. Parents' satisfaction with private schools is based on the climate they maintain, but this can have no connection with student learning.

The authors wander from this "good kids" argument in two ways. First, they profile some district-run schools that have created coherent instructional programs and maintained social climates that support learning, apparently without selecting their students. They accomplished this by gaining permission from their school districts to experiment and by offering distinctive academic programs. Second, the authors admit that private (especially Catholic) schools can influence their students' effort and deportment, mainly by pressuring parents.

Now, apparently, school practices do make a difference. But the authors, not wanting to be caught out there, claim that these private school practices—such as discouraging families that would hate the school from applying and treating choice as a two-way street that lets the school tell parents what's necessary for their kids to succeed—are illegitimate for publicly funded schools.

This sounds like a great case for privatization. Private schools possess real advantages, and they do not all boil down to hand picking students. True, some private schools are not competent enough to use those advantages, and some district-run public schools are able to distinguish themselves with exceptional academic programs. But the advantages of self-definition and reciprocal choice (between family and school and teacher and school) are inherently available to private schools, while district-run schools find them very hard to get and keep.

The authors of *All Else Equal* clearly set out to show that enabling independent parties, such as nonprofit organizations or private firms, to run publicly funded schools will do no good. Indeed, this became their conclusion, but without much support. The book reaches too far, from the safe statement that choice alone is not sufficient to a fallacious conclusion that choice is not necessary because it is not sufficient. Private schools, by virtue of their being private, are able to maintain some of the necessary conditions for providing a solid education: they can defend their instructional approach, and they can make reasonable demands on students, parents, and teachers. *All Else Equal* argues, contrary to its own evidence, against trying an approach that can bring better schools to poor children.

–Paul T. Hill is a research professor of public affairs at the University of Washington and director of the Center on Reinventing Public Education.

Call for Papers

Conference on Schooling and Human Capital Formation in the Global Economy: Revisiting the Equity-Efficiency Quandary

PEPG of Harvard University and CESifo Munich will jointly organize a conference in Munich on September 3- 4, 2004 to revisit the question of the educational equity-efficiency quandary, with a special focus on the role of school systems for human capital formation in the global economy. By bringing scholarly perspectives together from both sides of the Atlantic, the scientific organizers, Paul E. Peterson (Harvard) and Ludger Woessmann (Munich), hope to elicit new international perspectives on this pressing research question.

Researchers working in the field are invited to submit proposed (draft) papers electronically by January 31, 2004 to pepg_administrator@ksg.harvard.edu or woessmann@ifo.de.

For more information, go to www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/

CESifo

PEPG

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Behind Every Child, a Family

And behind every family, a community—including schools, which can maximize their impact on students' well-being by offering supports and resources for children *and* their families. Successful educators know that to most effectively promote kids' healthy development and school success, they must involve and engage their parents as partners.

We're here to help you do just that.

The National Family Support Resource

Family Support America can help you partner with parents to strengthen families through:

- A national conference featuring tracks on parent engagement, family support in schools, and more—**register now for our May 2004 conference at www.familysupportamerica.org!**
- Publications, resources, and training that offer step-by-step guidance on following the principles of family support practice
- Member benefits that include discounts on all these tools—and a strong national voice fighting for services that strengthen kids and families

Call us or visit our website to learn more about what we can do for you—and, ultimately, the children and families you serve.

FAMILY SUPPORT America

20 N. Wacker Drive
Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60606
312/338-0900
www.familysupportamerica.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by ROBERT MARANTO

Ignoring Advice

The disillusionment of public school politics

Back in 1976, when I was a crackerjack reporter for the Woodlawn High School *Calumet*, I interviewed the Baltimore County school district's superintendent, Joshua Wheeler. The conversation was to provide my introduction to the politics of public education.

I asked Wheeler, who was about to retire, why the district did not require students to pass proficiency tests in order to graduate. "I know we're a great school system," I said, "but even so, some of our kids graduate without being able to read and write."

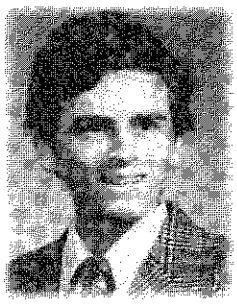
Wheeler's amazingly candid response is one that I will never forget. "Your question shows that you do not understand the purpose of the public education system," Wheeler intoned. "The purpose of public education is *not* to educate students. The purpose of public education is to provide an education for those *few* who want it."

"But what about the other kids?" I asked. "Why don't we let them leave school so the rest of us can learn? They'd be happier, we'd be happier, and it would save the taxpayers money." I thought I was the first person to come up with the idea.

"We can't do that," Wheeler explained patiently. "Crime would go up. Unemployment would go up. Parents would be angry. In 40 years in the school system, all I've heard from each generation is that the succeeding generation couldn't read as well. I happen to disagree ... and whenever we do require more homework and start failing kids, parents complain that their kids are working too hard."

Wheeler's sentiments are still shared by some educators today, though few would voice them in public. They just don't accord with the bipartisan "leave no child behind" attitude rippling through public education. But, however offensive his remarks might have been, Wheeler had one thing right: Americans tend to want schools that teach the basics, provide a bit of "academics," but add a lot of sports, dances, and other extracurricular activities. He had lasted six years as superintendent, a highly political position. A latter-day Horace Mann, who would want *academic* schools, couldn't have lasted six minutes.

After talking with Wheeler, much of what I saw at my beloved Woodlawn High School suddenly made sense. I now understood the teacher who slept through class, telling students that if they didn't bother him, he wouldn't bother them. I understood the goofy social studies teacher who taught us astrology rather than history; likewise, the math teacher who hated math, and so instead gave delightful lectures on libertarian philosophy.



Dedicated teachers were rebels, subverting the system by pushing students to meet high standards.

Not all my teachers were turkeys. Coach Goudy both won most of his games and pounded modern literature into his students with a no-holds-barred Socratic method. Mr. George, a brash ex-football player, practically bullied students into sharing his enthusiasm for history. My journalism teacher, Miss Warfield, taught me to write clearly and on deadline. While not always scintillating, a trio of science teachers, Mr. Bryant, Ms. Albrecht, and Mr. Lawler, gave students a real appreciation for the scientific method, which served me well years later as a researcher.

But those dedicated and knowledgeable teachers were rebels, subverting the system by pushing students to meet high standards, or at least *some* standards. As a high-school student, I planned someday to join their ranks and to do my small part to make the purpose of public schools *educating students*, not just providing an education to "those few who want it."

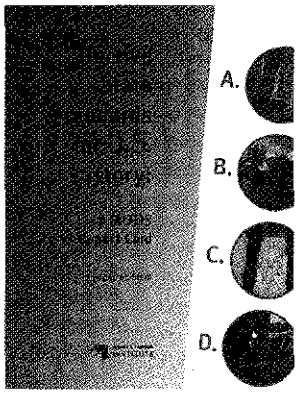
At least until I got to college. As a sophomore, I asked an education professor how to get certified to teach social studies. He explained that I would need 12 education classes, but only 4 in the social sciences. I had no need to *understand* the subject I taught, he insisted, since "the curriculum people will tell you what to teach." That was when I decided to become a political scientist.

–Robert Maranto is an assistant professor of political science at Villanova University.

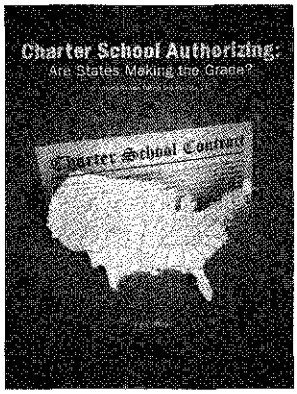
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Recently published by the THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE

THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE



Effective State Standards for U.S. History: A 2003 Report Card



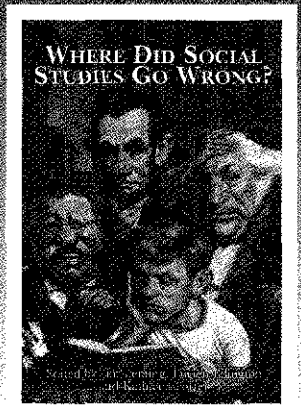
Charter School Authorizing: Are States Making the Grade?

www.edexcellence.net/institute

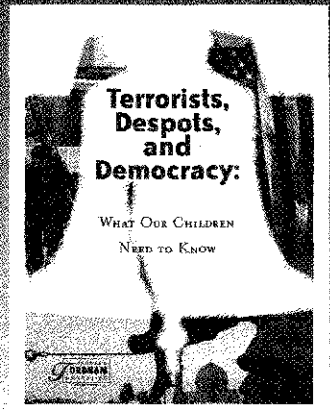
THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION
OUTSIDE THE BOX

Visit our updated, user-friendly website at www.edexcellence.net!

Recently published by the THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION



Where Did Social Studies Go Wrong?



Terrorists, Despots, and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

UPCOMING CONFERENCE:

50 Years After *Brown:*
What Has Been Accomplished and What Remains to be Done

April 23–24, 2004

On the campus of the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

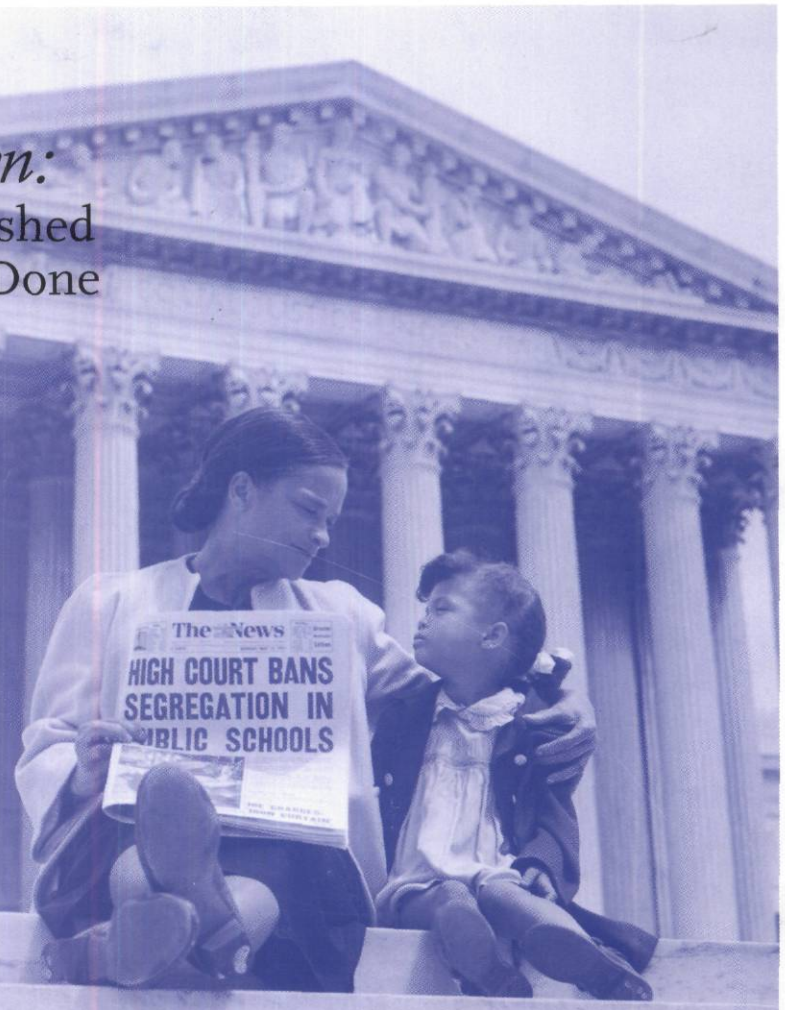
FORTHCOMING

The Future of School Choice
Paul E. Peterson, Editor
Hoover Press

PUBLICATIONS

The Education Gap: Vouchers and Urban Schools
by William G. Howell and Paul E. Peterson,
Brookings Institution Press

Vouchers, Charters, and Public Education
Paul E. Peterson and David E. Campbell,
Editors, Brookings Institution Press



PEPG

THE PROGRAM ON EDUCATION POLICY AND GOVERNANCE
within
The Taubman Center for State and Local Government
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
79 J. F. Kennedy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: (617) 495-7976 Fax: (617) 496-4428
www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/

EDUCATION next
A JOURNAL OF OPINION AND RESEARCH

226 Littauer, North Yard
1875 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02138-3001
Tel. (617) 495-2491, Fax (617) 496-1507
Website www.educationnext.org

To subscribe or to submit change of address information, call us at 1-800-935-2882; visit us at www.educationnext.org; fax us at (650) 723-8626; email us at hooverpress@hoover.stanford.edu; or write to *Education Next* Subscriptions, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-6010

Nonprofit
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 26
Peterborough, NH
03458

10070 XXXX 1
Ron K Unz
No. 371
555 Bryant St
Palo Alto CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED